

VICTOR DANNER

IBN 'AṬĀ'ILLĀH'S

ṢŪFĪ APHORISMS





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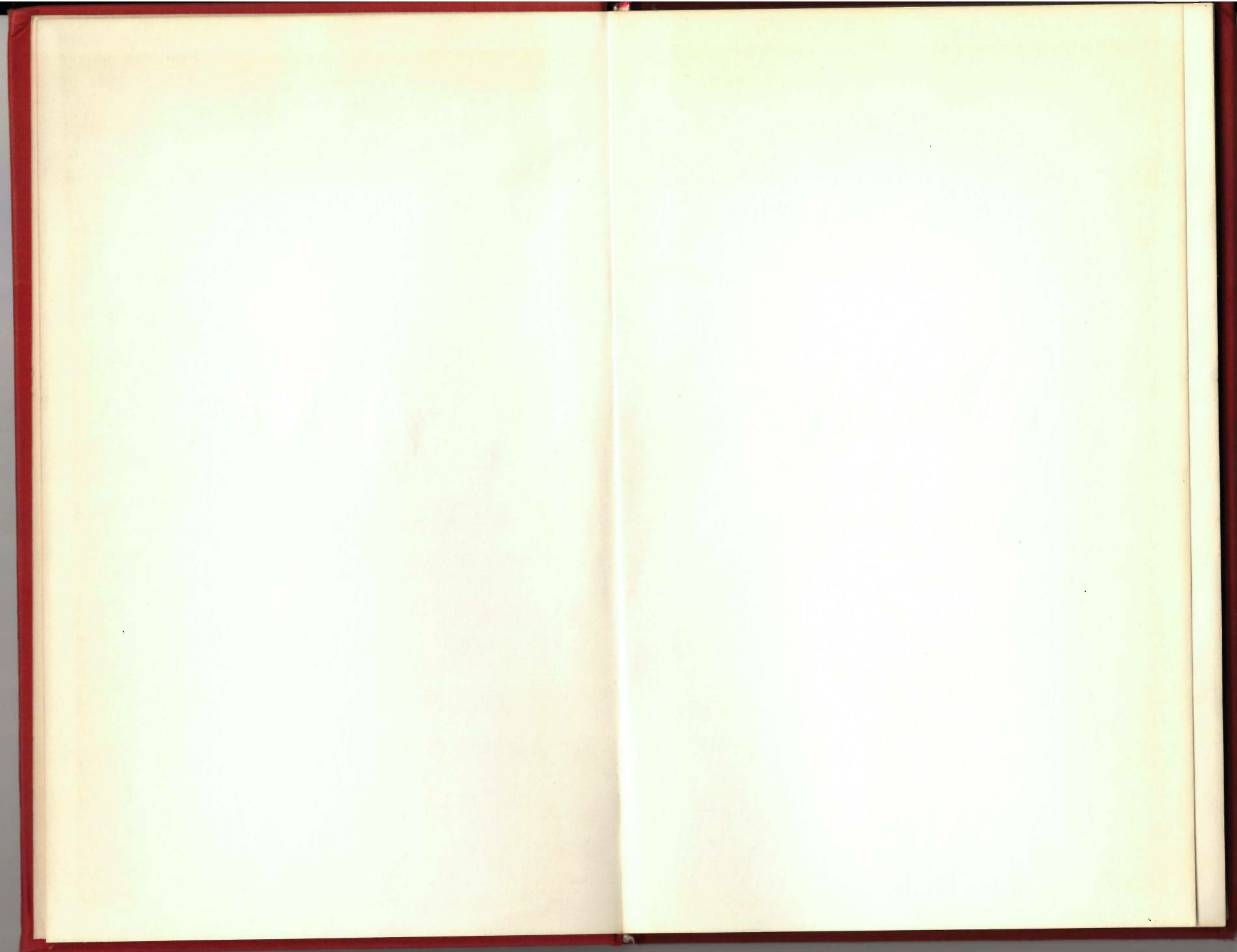
ŞŪFĪ APHORISMS





John Parker







IBN 'AṬĀ'ILLĀH'S  
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(KITĀB AL-ḤIKAM)



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**ṢŪFĪ APHORISMS**  
(KITĀB AL-ḤIKAM)

TRANSLATED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

VICTOR DANNER

FOREWORD BY MARTIN LINGS



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## FOREWORD

"This attractive and eloquent little book which has not yet been translated" is how Professor Arberry referred to *Kitāb al-Ḥikam*. That was in 1950 (*Sufism*, p. 88). The aphorisms themselves, without the last two sections of the work, had in fact already appeared in English, but in a translation done from a Malay translation. Victor Danner has the credit of being the first to bring out an English version of the whole direct from the original Arabic. It is also good to have it first of all without a commentary, so that the English reader can see exactly what Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh wrote. Moreover, as the translator observes, "the internal structure of the Ḥikam is such that it can be likened to a necklace of precious jewels". A commentary breaks the thread, whereas his annotations do not. None the less, it is to be hoped that he will go on to give us in English one or more of the profound commentaries that he mentions in his introductory remarks.

The main theme of the *Ḥikam* is, as he says, Gnosis (*ma'rifah*). In other words, instead of being a purely objective exposition of Oneness of Being, that doctrine is here deliberately "aimed" at the reader so that he may experience as it were a continual knocking on the doors of his intelligence. Bound up with this is the theme of *adab* which, when it is a Ṣūfī term, may be translated "pious courtesy". Gnosis is not merely an act of the intelligence; it demands a total participation; and *adab* in its highest sense is the conformity of the soul, in all its different facets, to the Divine Presence.

It may be inferred from these remarks that the *Ḥikam* is one of those books which are liable to be underestimated "from outside". Here perhaps lies the explanation of the immense disparity between Western scholars' neglect of it, relatively speaking, and the praises that have been lavished on it by the Ṣūfis themselves ever since it was written. If their opinion is a criterion — and whose opinion can be weighed against theirs in this respect? — we have here, in this little volume, one of the great basic texts of Islamic mysticism.

Martin LINGS



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks are due to Professor George Makdisi of Harvard University for his critical advice and guidance; to Dr. Martin Lings of the British Museum for his help; and to Titus Burckhardt for many suggestions concerning the translation.

We must also indicate our appreciation to the various Arabic manuscript libraries for their kind assistance: the British Museum, Fātiḥ, Tübingen, Rampur, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Escorial.

## PREFACE

The aim of this work has been to situate Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, the Egyptian Ṣūfī (d. 709/1309), within the matrix of the Islamic tradition. We have sought to understand him within his own traditional ambiance more than to subject him to the scrutiny of a non-Islamic viewpoint.

He was the third great master of the Ṣūfī order of the Shādhiliyya, founded by Abū 'l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258), the Moroccan Ṣūfī. Western scholars, such as Louis Massignon and Miguel Asín Palacios, have made references to him. He is well known in the Muslim world primarily because his order, the Shādhiliyya, has played a vital role in the spiritual life of the Community for centuries.

The world view of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was a religious one and is still operative, to a large extent, in the Muslim world. He did not have to invent it for himself since everything was provided for him by the all-enveloping tradition. It came to him simply by virtue of the fact that he was a Muslim of Mamluk days in Egypt. The classic structures of Islam had been laid down centuries before his time. He had only to make the proper responses and the rest would take care of itself; but he had nothing to fabricate with his own hands. That world had a teleological signification of a persuasive force for the intelligent Muslim of good will.

Much of what is found in the works of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, and more particularly his *Kitāb al-Ḥikam*, represents the core of Ṣūfism, based on the Quran and the Sunna or Norm of Muhammad. This Ṣūfī current detached itself from the juridico-theological schools that arose in the 3rd/9th centuries. His Mālikism and the essential nature of his Ṣūfism, therefore, go back to the early days of Islam.

Ṣūfism is Islamic spirituality, and by that we mean it has to do with the realm of the Spirit in an immediate sense. The word *ṭarīqa* means generically "the spiritual Path" as distinguished from the *sharī'a*, the "sacred Law." We have eschewed the terms "mystic" and "mysticism" in regard to Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and his doctrines and methods because in the West such terms nowadays are confusing. If in the West it were generally agreed that "mysticism" means the teachings and practices of the Fathers of the Church, the Hesychasts,



and such sages as Meister Eckhart, or their counterparts amongst the Ancients, then Ṣūfism is indeed mysticism, and the Ṣūfis are mystics. But in the West the most conflicting opinions exist on what mysticism is, due no doubt to the absence of anything similar to the permanent tradition of Ṣūfism in Islam. That being the case, the term Ṣūfism is best left intact: so long as it is understood as a body of teachings and methods having to do with spiritual realization leading to union with God at one degree or another, it cannot be confused with the aberrant forms of "mysticism" so rampant in modern times in the West.

One should recall that Ṣūfism considers itself to be the very essence of Islam, its spiritual heart, and not something extraneous to that tradition. While it is true that certain Neoplatonist notions intruded themselves into the perspective of Ṣūfism from the 3rd/9th century onwards, this did not constitute such a radical transformation as is generally thought, for those notions were perfectly compatible with the Ṣūfi doctrines on the Divine Unity (*at-tawḥīd*). And in any case, they were not ideas that were false in themselves, but true, and therefore easily assimilable by later masters of the Path.

The term "Ṣūfī" and its cognates were, of course, of later origin than the Quranic Revelation, but this does not mean that the Path itself is of later invention. From the Ṣūfī point of view, the Path, like the Law, begins with Muḥammad and is of revealed origins. It is only subsequently, when need for clarification and codification took place, that the word "Ṣūfī" comes into being, precisely when the other, more exoteric aspects of Islam come into being with their own epithets (such as Ḥanbalī, Mālikī, and the like). Ṣūfī esoterism, hence, arises at the moment that the legalistic exoterism of Islam begins to crystallize. The reality of the Path, however, was always there. It is only when the terms Ṣūfī and the like enter the scene that we can say that the Path or *ṭarīqa* and Ṣūfism are synonymous. One should recall that, as regards the essence of their teachings and methods of realization, the Ṣūfis hark back to the Prophet himself, so much so that, without the Quran and the Sunna, the fundamental pillars of Islam, there is no Path, no Ṣūfism.

The Law (*sharī'a*) of Islam has in view the posthumous salvation of the individual, while the Path (*ṭarīqa*) has in view the liberation, through gnosis (*ma'rifa*), of the individual in this life. From the moment that the two facets of Islam, the exoteric and the esoteric,

separated, in the early period of Islamic history, each has had its own teachers, methods, terminology, and perspectives. While there have been conflicts, inevitable because of the incomprehension of exoteric Islam, there have always been reconciliations, and there have even been many pious authorities of the Law (the *fuqahā*) who have recognized, and still do, the integrity and independence of the masters of the Path. Obviously, the Law concerns the vast number of Muslims, the Path a limited group; but this does not mean that the Path as such excludes the Law. On the contrary, without the Law of Islam there is no Path, as the greatest Ṣūfis themselves would say. The great difference between the two dimensions of Islam lies in the deeper comprehension of the spiritual contents of the Revelation that the Ṣūfis have always shown. Nevertheless, the Ṣūfis have always revealed a special affection for the Muslims possessed of faith (*īmān*) but who are not attached to Ṣūfism, and this they have done perhaps because they realize how rare faith, as distinct from mere belief, is in this world.

The word "gnosis" (*ma'rifa*) is the preferred term in Ṣūfism for the knowledge of the Real that comes to him who treads the Path. It should not be confused with any special type of "gnosticism" such as existed in the early Christian Church. As the Ṣūfis understand it, gnosis comes as the summit of faith, and not contrary to faith. They have also used the term "knowledge" or "science" (*ilm*), but this soon became much too theoretical and abstract, whereas *ma'rifa* has, in addition to its theoretical implications, the sense of experienced or concrete knowledge of God.

What has to be borne in mind is that there have always been in this world individuals for whom the ordinary interpretations of religion, in its dogmatic and obdiential dress, are not sufficient to satisfy their intellectual and spiritual aspirations. They sense the compression of forms, religious or otherwise, and seek that which is beyond all forms, not because they are arrogant or unsatisfied with posthumous salvation, but because the Spirit moves them to search for liberation. It is to these people that Shaykh Ibn 'Aḩā'illāh addresses himself. And when they move in the direction of the Path, such people find that the religious forms themselves, far from being obstacles, help them towards their goal. Now, the goal of the Path is the unveiling of the heart, and this in turn leads to the solar radiation of the Self. As the Ṣūfi poem says, "Verily, the sun of day sets at night, but the Sun of hearts never sets!"



## TABLE OF TRANSLITERATIONS

### Arabic Characters:

ء  
 ب  
 ت  
 ث  
 ج  
 ح  
 خ  
 د  
 ذ  
 ر  
 ز  
 س  
 ش  
 ص  
 ض  
 ط  
 ظ  
 ع  
 ف  
 ق  
 ك  
 ل  
 م  
 ن  
 ه  
 و  
 ي

### Short Vowels:

——— a  
 ——— i  
 ——— u

### Long Vowels:

| ā  
 ي ī  
 و ū

ة = a; at (construct state)

ال = al- and 'l- (except  
before anteropalatals)

### Diphthongs:

و ——— aw  
 ي ——— ay

ِي = iyy (final form ī)  
 ُو = uww (final form ū)

## THE LIFE AND WORKS OF IBN 'AṬĀ'ILLĀH

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was born in Egypt in the middle of the 7th/13th century, as far as we can determine conjecturally, and he died there in the year 709/1309. Most of his life was spent in that land. Egypt had become, under the Mamluk regime, the political and religious center of the eastern part of the Muslim world once the Caliphate had disappeared from Baghdad in 656/1258. The Mamluks had come to power when our author was growing up in Alexandria. They had checked the Mongols, suppressed the Ismā'īlis, and banished from the Levant the Christian powers that had long been entrenched there. They gave to Sunnite Islam a much more homogeneous nature, and they ushered in an impressive artistic and architectural epoch wherein Islam could once again flower forth. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh himself was one of the spiritual lights of Mamluk Egypt.

To situate his life and works correctly, one has to see them in relation to the revitalization of Ṣūfī gnosis (*ma'rifa*) that was so evident in the 7th/13th century, a period that played a determining role in laying the bases, both spiritual and intellectual, for the future of Islam. There was an eruption of Ṣūfism then that we do not see in previous ages. Ṣūfism, as seen by its partisans, is the heart of Islam, its Spirit, not something adventitious or extraneous. Whatever happens to it, happens to the rest of the Community. The "Second wind" of Ṣūfism in that day amounted therefore to a second wind for Islam in general.

Two phenomena of extraordinary importance appear in that century. One of them is Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240), the Andalusian Ṣūfī sage whose sanctity and literary production justly prove the title *ash-shaykh al-akbar* ("the most-great master") that Ṣūfism has bestowed on him in subsequent centuries.<sup>1</sup> His doctrine of

<sup>1</sup> On Ibn al-'Arabī, see *GAL*, I, 441-446, Suppl. I, 790-802; Osman Yahya, *Histoire et classification de l'œuvre d'Ibn 'Arabī* (2 vols.; Damascus, 1964); H. Corbin, *L'Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabī* (Paris, 1958); Titus Burckhardt, *La Sagesse des Prophètes* (Paris, 1955); and the good summary of his life and works by S.H. Nasr, in *Three Muslim Sages* (Cambridge, U.S.A., 1964), chap. III, pp. 83-121. On the translation of the key metaphysical doctrine of Ibn al-'Arabī, *waḥdat al-wujūd*, as "Oneness of Being," see Martin Lings' *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century* (London, 1971),



*waḥdat al-wujūd* ("the Oneness of Being"), expressed in numerous works, particularly his *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* ("The Meccan Revelations") and the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* ("The Bezels of Wisdom"), represent a magistral synthesis of Ṣūfī esoteric doctrines heretofore presented only tangentially or obliquely by previous masters. The immensity of his enterprise manifests, not so much an improvement over his predecessors, as a providential response to the weakening intuitive perceptions of the Islamic Community. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh himself would see the day when he would have to defend the Andalusian sage against the calumnies hurled against him by the Ḥanbalī theologian and canonist Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328).

The second phenomenon of that century is the rise of numerous Ṣūfī orders (*ṭuruq*, pl. of *ṭarīqa*), which explosively manifest themselves all over the Muslim world, such as the Mawlawiyya, the Aḥmadiyya, the Chishtiyya, the Kubrawiyya, and the Shādhiliyya, which is the one Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh belonged to when he turned to the Path.<sup>1</sup> This likewise is unique in the history of Islam. Previously, there had been the "circles" (*ṭawā'if*) of Ṣūfism, such as the Sālīmiyya of the 3rd/9th century, which had been assimilated by later Ṣūfī groups; and in the 6th/12th century, one or two orders, like the Qādiriyya of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 561/1166) had seen the light of day. But there had been nothing comparable to the renaissance of Ṣūfism in the 7th/13th century, which has to be something of a threshold in the history of the Islamic tradition. These orders, for the most part, once established, continued on down to the present day with offshoots here and there. In some respects, Ibn al-'Arabī represented the "theoretical" aspect of Ṣūfism, while the orders represented the "realizational" aspect, and both would leave a permanent imprint on Islam down to our times. The Shādhiliyya, which soon spread over the face of the Muslim world, eventually became one of the dominant orders and its masters (*mashāyikh*) figure amongst the greatest of Islam. Now, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh is himself one of the eminent early masters of the Shādhiliyya.

Thus, these two phenomena, Ibn al-'Arabī and the eruption of numerous Ṣūfī orders, constitute together a powerful reaffirmation of Islamic gnosis (*ma'rifa*) that amounts to nothing less than a

s.v. *waḥdat al-wujūd* in Index. The work by the eminent Spanish scholar Asin Palacios, *El Islam cristianizado* (Madrid, 1931), is a mine of information on the teachings and methods of Ibn al-'Arabī.

<sup>1</sup> For the Shādhiliyya, see *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Shādhiliya."

rebirth of Islam. This took place in the Muslim world at the very same moment that the Christian world, in the West, was abandoning its spiritual birthright in favor of Aristotelianism, as represented by its scholastic partisans. Just as Ṣūfism in the 7th/13th century laid the groundwork for the future development of Islam, so similarly the Christian Aristotelianism of the age led eventually, step by step, to developments in Christianity that would end in rationalism and the disintegration of the Christian Message. Therefore, the rebirth of Islam at the time is of vital importance, and its gnostic bases must not be ignored.

Such a rebirth would not have been so powerfully fruitful had it not been for the centuries-old integration of Ṣūfī institutions into the fabric of Islamic society. Earlier rulers of Islam, especially the Saljuks, had built, not only *madrasas* for the study of the Law, but also *khānqāhs* for the Ṣūfī masters and their disciples. Later rulers, such as the Ayyūbids and the Mamluks, would follow their example. They did this no doubt to strengthen the bases of Sunnite Islam. As a result, a type of court protocol arose which was applied to those masters of Ṣūfism recognized by the State as spokesmen for the Path. The masters had special titles used to address them in court ceremony or through correspondence; they held lofty ranks in the courts; the sultans and their retinues visited them regularly for advice and counsel; and the State provided the masters and their disciples with stipends and imposing quarters in the *khānqāhs*.<sup>1</sup>

Long before Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh came upon the scene, there was a general awareness amongst the rulers and people alike that the

<sup>1</sup> In the *Subḥ al-a'shā* (Cairo, 1914-1928) of Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), there are many passages dealing with Ṣūfī institutions because they were tied up with Mamluk protocol. In *op. cit.*, IV, 39-40, for example, he speaks of the vestments of the four classes of notables in the kingdom: the military chiefs, the religious scholars, the masters of Ṣūfism, and the ministers of the State; and on p. 40, in particular, he describes the dress of the Ṣūfī *mashāyikh* at the court. In *op. cit.*, XII, 101-103, he gives an example of the type of letter, with the appropriate honorary titles, that could be written to the *shaykh* of a *khānqāh*. By his day, the *shaykh* of *Sa'id as-su'adā'* was no longer the highest in rank, but rather he was below the *shaykh* of *Siryāqūs*, the enormous *khānqāh* built by al-Malik an-Nāṣir in 725/1325 (*op. cit.*, IV, 34-39). On the great *Siryāqūs*, cf. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, II, 261: it had 100 cells for the *fuqarā'*, a Friday mosque, a guest-house, a bath-house, a kitchen, and was completed in a record-breaking 40 days. The *Rukniyya*, another *khānqāh*, had facilities for over 400 *fuqarā'* and a fortress that could house 100 troops (cf. Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *Nujūm*, VIII, 266).



masters of the Path, together with their institutions, represented something quite distinct from the religious authorities of the Law, (the *fuqahā*), who had their own social framework. An ambiance had been created, in other words, that permitted the contemplative life of the Path to be quite visibly apparent in the very midst of the Islamic society. There had developed, in consequence of all this, an obvious distinction between the planes of authority within the overall Islamic tradition. The masters, on the one hand, exercised a spiritual authority within the structures of the Ṣūfī Path, which was contemplative and essentially gnostic in orientation. The doctors of the Law, on the other hand, functioned as the religious authority occupied with the legalistic, ritualistic, and dogmatic obligations of the Muslims in general, or with those actions, in short, that led to posthumous salvation.

All of that had been crystallized long before the 7th/13th century. It provided a ready-made mould for the afore-mentioned "second wind" of Ṣūfism, which therefore had nothing to invent to reassert its presence with relative ease. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was influenced by the Ṣūfī currents of the day: he knew the works of Ibn al-'Arabī, he was himself a Shādhilī master, and he moved within a pre-established institutional framework provided him by the Islamic tradition that made his task as a master of the Path simple enough to carry out. He was but one of numberless *shaykhs* that Ṣūfism could point to in his day and they all had the backing of the rich institutionalized resources of the Islamic tradition.

Very little is known of the early life of our author, or even when he was born, though it can be said with some plausibility that he came into the world around the middle of the 7th/13th century. We do know that he was born into a distinguished family of Mālikī religious scholars of Alexandria. His grandfather, who left behind some religious works of merit, was the founder, or perhaps the reviver, of a dynasty of scholars known as the Banū Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh.<sup>1</sup> Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh himself became an eminent member of that dynasty and took the place of his grandfather in Alexandrian religious circles. The family origins stem from the Judhām, an Arab tribe

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), in his *Muqaddima* (Beirut, 1956), p. 813, calls attention to the importance of Alexandria for Mālikism and to the great scholarly dynasties of the Banū 'Awf, Banū Sanad, and Banū Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh. The grandfather of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was 'Abd al-Karīm ibn 'Aṭā'illāh (d. 612/1216); see on him the *Dibāj*, p. 167, and *Husn*, I, 260.

that settled in Egypt during the early Muslim conquests. The *nisba* of al-Judhāmī in the complete name of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh attests therefore to his Arab blood.<sup>1</sup>

From an early age he was destined for greatness in Mālikī studies. He had the best teachers in all the ancillary disciplines of the Law, such as grammar, the study of *ḥadīths*, Quranic commentary, jurisprudence, Ash'arite theology, and Arabic literature in general. His expertness in Mālikism soon drew attention to him and knowledgeable Alexandrian scholars were not long in comparing him with his famous grandfather as a *faqīh*. More than likely, he attended one of the religious schools, or *madrasas*, that the Ayyūbids had constructed in Alexandria for the study of the Law, especially in its Mālikī aspects.

Mālikism, the dominant school of Islamic jurisprudence in the Maghrib, had been implanted in Alexandria for quite some time, in spite of the fact that Egypt was mostly shaped by Shāfi'ism. This was due in large measure to the location of Alexandria as a crossroads between the Maghrib and the Mashriq. It had a sizeable colony of Maghribīs who had settled there because of its congenial atmosphere. With the passing of time, the seaport took on a Mālikī coloration and even a special Maghribī atmosphere. This explains the prevailing religious orientation that instilled Mālikism in the Banū Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and therefore in our author. Moreover, apart from the question of Mālikism as a *madhhab*, or a school of jurisprudence, that loomed large in the city, there was also the fact that Alexandria was a meeting-place for Ṣūfism in both its western and eastern guises. It boasted of many Ṣūfī *zāwiyas*, or meeting-houses, and hermitages. It was common for the great Ṣūfis coming from the Maghrib to stop over or settle permanently in the city. Some of the great Maghribī Ṣūfis are associated with the city; and, indeed, the Alexandrian Ṣūfis in the days of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh are amongst the most illustrious that Ṣūfism has to offer. As a

<sup>1</sup> His complete name was Tāj ad-Dīn Abū 'l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm ibn 'Aṭā'illāh al-Judhāmī al-Mālikī al-Iskandarī. Ibn Farḥūn, in *Dibāj*, p. 70, adds the *kunya* of Abū 'l-'Abbās. All sources are agreed that he was a Mālikī, except Subkī, in *Tabaqāt*, V, 176, who hesitates between Shāfi'ism and Mālikism. On the Arab tribe of the Judhām in Egypt, cf. Maqrīzī's *al-Bayān wa 'l-i'rāb 'ammā bi-arḍ Miṣr min 'l-'Arab* (Cairo, 1961), pp. 6, 11, 12, 15-27. On Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh himself, cf. *GAL*, I, 117-118, Suppl. II, 145-147; and George Makdisi, *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh."



matter of fact, a discernible shift in the spiritual axis of Islam had been taking place since the days of Ibn al-'Arabī, the Andalusian who settled eventually in the eastern part of the Muslim world. This was a reversal of the movement of Ṣūfism from east to west. Now the western Ṣūfis were moving towards the east. The Maghrib seems to have become a bastion of Ṣūfism which would influence considerable areas of the Muslim world from thence on.

One of those movements in an easterly direction occurred shortly before Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was born, and it would affect deeply his future spiritual life. Shaykh Abū l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258),<sup>1</sup> the Moroccan Ṣūfī, had originally founded his first *zāwiya* in Tunis in the year 625/1227. After great success there he had a vision commanding him to move eastwards. The center of his *ṭarīqa* was accordingly moved to Alexandria in the year 642/1244, only about six years or so from the probable date of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's birth. There in Alexandria, in one of the enormous towers then jutting up from the outer walls surrounding the landward side of the city, he set up his second center of instruction. Here, too, and even in Cairo amongst the ruling families, he had great success.

His *ṭarīqa* has been characterized as a throwback to the days of the Prophet and his Companions because its adepts wore no distinctive garments to set them apart from the world around them nor did they abandon their professions in society. In other words, Shaykh Abū l-Ḥasan taught them to integrate their daily round of existence into the Path with discernment and concentration. He even disliked to initiate any would-be aspirant unless he had a profession. The Shaykh himself was sometimes misunderstood by the authorities of the State because they could not see in him the usual distinctive dress and traits of the other Ṣūfī adherents of the day.

<sup>1</sup> For him see *GAL*, I, 449, Suppl. I, 804-806. Two early works contain the nucleus of biographical details on the Shaykh: the *Laṭā'if* of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and the *Durrat al-asrār* of the early 8th/14th century Ṣūfī author Ibn aṣ-Ṣabbāgh. A *sharīf*, but with a lineage that has been disputed, it is well to remember that his connection with 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is through al-Ḥassan ibn al-Ḥasan, not Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, as is sometimes given, for that Muḥammad had no offspring. Ṣafādī (d. 764/1363), in his *Nakb al-himyan fī nukat al-umyān* (Cairo, 1329/1911), p. 213, gives the wrong lineage, as does Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, in his *Laṭā'if*, I, 73. The correct line is in al-Kattānī's *Salwat al-anfās* (Fez, 1316/1898), I, 84-95.

Gnosis (*ma'rifa*) was the perspective of his order. Like many other masters before him, he insisted that the gnostics (*'arifūn*) were not to be reduced to mere ascetics (*zuhhād*) or pious devotees (*'abbād*), though of course both ascetic and devotional attitudes were elements in his new order. The gnosis he speaks of is really the summit of Islamic faith and has no complicated analytical scaffolding to back it up, as was the case for Ibn al-'Arabī's teachings. As a matter of fact, he wrote nothing in the way of a detailed and schematic presentation of his doctrines. All we have emanating from his hand are the widely-recited litanies (*aḥzāb*), for which he claimed inspiration. These litanies are Quranic verses interlaced with his own words and contain, in rather concrete and subtle fashion, the Islamic doctrine of the affirmation of the Divine Unity, or *tawḥīd*, taken to its ultimate spiritual roots.<sup>1</sup>

We have no reason to believe that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh ever met or saw Shaykh Abū l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī, but we do know that his father had been a disciple of the Shaykh and one of the sources Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh depended on when compiling his biographical work on the first two masters of his order, the *Laṭā'if*. But even if he had met the great founder of the Shādhiliyya, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh would have been much too young, around five or six, to profit from his experience, for Shaykh Abū l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī died in the eastern desert of Egypt, at Ḥumaythira, in the year 656/1258, some weeks after the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols. His tomb still stands there to the present day.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His litanies were tremendously popular in the days of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, as he himself says (*Laṭā'if*, II, 36). He gives some of the better-known *aḥzāb* in *Laṭā'if*, II, 49-66. When Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited a small village on the Nile in the year 725 A. H., he found the teachers and students of the *madrasa* there reciting the litanies of Abū 'l-Ḥasan (*Rihla*, p. 51); and he himself gives the complete text of one of them (*op. cit.*, 26-27). Completely vowelized texts of the *aḥzāb* are to be found in the *Anwār al-quḍsiyya* (Istanbul, 1302 A.H.), II, 1-62, by Muḥammad Ḍāfir al-Madanī, a Shādhili master of the late 13th/19th century. C.E. Padwick, in her study of contemporary Muslim prayer-manuals, *Muslim Devotions* (London, 1961), gives numerous references to the widespread diffusion of these litanies amongst present-day Muslims (cf. pp. 27, 78, 85, 90, etc., for partial translations into English).

<sup>2</sup> The tombs of many of his disciples are still venerated in Tunisia; cf. Brunschvig, *Berbérie orientale*, II, 329; this is especially the case for the woman saint, Lallā al-Mannūbiyya (cf. *ET*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "'Ā'isha bint Ṭalḥa"). Shaykh Abū 'l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī's tomb at Ḥumaythira is famous and much revered. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited the tomb in the year 625 A.H. on his way further eastwards



Shortly before passing away, he designated as his successor over the order the Andalucian Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī (d. 686/1288), who had joined his circle of disciples in Tunis.<sup>1</sup> He continued to hold sway over the order in the same tower used as a *zāwiya* by his master. In his day, many Shādhili masters appeared on the scene both in the Maghrib and in the Mashriq. The *ṭarīqa* had now emerged as a living reality and was a going concern. But Shaykh Abū l-'Abbās never left Alexandria. He seems never to have had the easy relations with the political authorities that his master had; on the contrary, he refused to have anything to do with the rulers and princes of the day. Like his master, he wrote nothing at all, apart from some litanies, but these are not as well known as those of his teacher. What we know of his remarks is due largely to the biographical efforts of his disciple, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh. Even so, his greatness in the Path is attested to by other important figures of his time and afterwards. When he passed away in the year 686/1288, the masters of the Shādhiliyya could be found in Tunis, Alexandria, Mecca, Cairo, and possibly further to the west in Spain and Moroc-

and again on his return a quarter of a century later (*Rihla*, pp. 53, 282), so that it was already famous centuries ago.

<sup>1</sup> For the life of Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī (his complete name was Shihāb ad-Dīn Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Umar al-Anṣārī al-Mursī ash-Shādhilī), cf. *Laṭā'if*, I, 98 ff., and *Durrat al-asrār*, pp. 146 ff. Ibn 'Iyād's *Mafākhīr*, which contains a lot of Shādhilī materials, nevertheless is based on these two works, as he himself says (*op. cit.*, p. 4), and the same holds true, in general, for all other biographical accounts of al-Mursī, such as *Husn*, I, 300; Sha'rānī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 12-18; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rikh*, VIII, 57; *Nujūm*, VII, 371; *Sulūk*, I, 738; and al-Maqqarī's *Nafḥ at-ṭib*, I, 586-589. The Ṣūfī al-Yāfi'ī makes frequent references to al-Mursī in his works, such as the *Rawḍ*, the *Nashr al-maḥāsin*, and *Mir'āt al-janān*. Sahykh Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī is said to have been, like his own master, the polar saint of the epoch (*qutb az-zamān*), according to the *Laṭā'if*, I, 116. His tomb lies in the great mosque at Alexandria that bears his name; see on this Sandūbī, *Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī wa maṣjīduh al-jāmi' bi l-'Iskandariyya* (Cairo, 1944), pp. 127 ff. Amongst his disciples, apart from Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, were the famous poet al-Būṣīrī (d. 694/1295), known for his Mantle Poem (*al-Burda*) in praise of the Prophet; the Alexandrian Ṣūfī of Abyssinian origins, Shaykh Yāqūt al-'Arshī (d. 732/1332); and the great Persian Ṣūfī, Shaykh Najm ad-Dīn al-'Iṣfahānī (d. 721/1321), who passed away in Mecca after a long residence there. The latter was the Shādhilī master of al-Yāfi'ī (d. 768/1367), and it is through al-Yāfi'ī that the Shī'ī Ṣūfī order of the Nī'matu 'Ilāhiyya is connected with the Shādhiliyya: cf. Jean Aubin, *Matériaux pour la biographie de Shah Nī'matullah Wali Kermani* (Paris, 1956), p. 293 (in Persian).

co. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was one of his disciples who in time became a famous *shaykh* in the Shādhilī order.

Unlike his father, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was not drawn to the Path in the beginning. As an accomplished scholar in Mālikī jurisprudence, he had gained a certain renown even though he was quite young. He was already on his way to being an eminent *faqīh*. His fellow students had warned him that anyone who dived in Ṣūfism would never master the Law. Initially, he was hostile towards the Ṣūfī Path and had a certain antagonism towards Shaykh Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī himself. He even had violent arguments with some of the Shaykh's disciples, going so far as to say that beyond the letter of the Law there was nothing else to be sought after.

But he had nothing in particular against the Shaykh and finally mustered enough courage to go to one of his public lectures, where he found him discussing the different aspects of Islam. This was his first view of the master, and it took place in the year 674/1276, some twelve years before the Shaykh's death. It proved to be the decisive turning-point in his life, for he was converted on the spot. Forthwith he put himself under the Shaykh's guidance and became in due time one of his most serious and promising disciples. To his joy, he learned from the Shaykh that his entry into the Path did not prevent him from pursuing his studies of the Law. The Shaykh even predicted that, in due time, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh would become an authority in both the Path and the Law. This prediction eventually came true.

The metamorphosis of a Mālikī *faqīh* into a Ṣūfī master is not easily discernible. But it is clear that it could not have been too many years after his first meeting with the Shaykh. For one thing, he wrote his *Kitāb al-Ḥikam*, which gives obvious proof of his mastership (*shuyūkh*) of the Path, while his Shaykh was still alive, since we hear that al-Mursī gave it his stamp of approval. For another, he was already established in Cairo as a *shaykh* when al-Mursī passed away in Alexandria in the year 686/1288.

It is in Cairo that Shaykh Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī's prediction of greatness for Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh came true. There he spent the remainder of his life as an honored and well-known Ṣūfī master and Mālikī *faqīh*. He led two lives, as it were. One was his professional life as a teacher of Mālikī studies in various institutions in Cairo, such as the Azhar and the *madrasa* in the Maṣṣūriyya complex, not to mention his public preaching, which drew large audiences. The other life was



devoted to his duties as a *shaykh* in the Shādhilī order, but we are not certain where in Cairo his *zāwiya* might have been. We are aware that he had disciples both at Cairo and Alexandria and that he was considered the foremost spokesman for Ṣūfism in the Mamluk capital. He even counselled the ill-starred but pious sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Lājīn (d. 698/1298) on the proper expression of gratitude towards God, which shows that he had a certain standing at the court. Yet it is difficult to reconstruct his life in any detailed fashion.

For the most part, his life was quite uneventful, and in this respect he seems like a normal Ṣūfī. Nevertheless, he did come face-to-face with the Ḥanbalī theologian and jurist Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who was a staunch defender of Islamic puritanism and dead-set against some of the great names of Ṣūfism, such as Ibn al-'Arabī. He had gotten himself into deep trouble with Ṣūfī personalities in Cairo over his attacks against the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabī. But political and theological controversies intervened to further complicate the problem. The Shāfi'is of the epoch were mostly of Ash'arī theological persuasion, while the Ḥanbalis, a smaller group, were as usual against any speculative theological interpretations. For the Ash'aris this was yet another occasion to suppress the Ḥanbalis. The confusion was compounded by the political personalities of the day amongst the Mamluk princes, who were then jockeying for power. But it was his attacks against the venerable person of Ibn al-'Arabī and his ideas that made Ibn Taymiyya the target of the Ṣūfī groups of his day, and it is this that stirred Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh to action. At the head of a vast stream of hundreds of *fuqarā'* and *shaykhs*, he went to the Citadel in Cairo and confronted Ibn Taymiyya under the watchful eyes of the religious authorities who were fearful of the Ḥanbalī canonist. Nothing came of the encounter and the resulting futile discussions at the Citadel, so Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh withdrew with unpleasant memories of this stern and hide-bound exponent of Ḥanbalī literalism, a classic example of the Muslim exoterist, even though, like many other *fuqahā'* of the day he belonged to one of the Ṣūfī orders.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note that it was Ibn Taymiyya's attacks against Ibn al-'Arabī that loomed large in the mind of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and his partisans: cf. *Bidāya*, XIV, 45; *Sulūk*, II, 40; and *DK*, I, 148. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh never refers to Ibn Taymiyya by name in his works, but it is clearly of him that he speaks when he says that God has put the Ṣūfis to the test through "the exoterists" or doctors of the Law (*Laṭā'if*, II, 17-18). We owe to Professor George Makdisi of Harvard the information that Ibn Taymiyya had studied under a Ṣūfī *shaykh*.

Only two years or so afterwards, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh died at around sixty years of age. He passed away at the *madrasa* of the Manṣūriyya, where he had been teaching Mālikī jurisprudence. His funeral procession was immense, and he was buried in the Qarāfa cemetery where his tomb still stands to the present day next to that of another Shādhilī saint, the famous Shaykh 'Alī Abū l-Wafā' (d. 807/1405), whose spiritual lineage connects him directly to Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh. For centuries his tomb was famous and visited by the pious, and soon it became the focus of *karāmāt*, or miracles, of various sorts.<sup>1</sup>

The immediate spiritual legacy of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh is more concretely embodied in his disciples than in his books. Like himself in relation to his own master, his disciples relived under his guidance the truths contained with the Ṣūfī Path. They are therefore links connecting him with subsequent generations in a living sense, just as he had been a link with the past. Amongst his disciples, there were those who became masters in their turn, thus prolonging the inner life of the order. His direct successor in the Shādhilī order, if we go by the *silṣila* found in the Maghrib, was Shaykh Dāwūd al-Bākhilī (d. 732/1332), likewise a learned Mālikī scholar whose Ṣūfī compositions have circulated down to the present day.<sup>2</sup> Another eminent disciple of his was Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn ibn

<sup>1</sup> Depending on the source, he died in the middle of Jumādā II, 709 A.H. (*DK*, I, 273); on the 13th of Jumādā II, but in the year 710 A.H. (*Sulūk*, II, 94); on the 13th of Jumādā II, 709 A.H. (*Husn*, I, 301); in the month of Jumādā II, 709 A.H. (Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, V, 177); and so on, so that there seems to be general agreement on the month and the year. See also Sha'rānī, *Tabaqāt*, II, 19; Yāfi'i, *Mir'āt al-janān*, IV, 246; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, VI, 20. The historian and traditionist Dhahabī (cited in *DK*, I, 274) says that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh had "impressive majesty." Interestingly, his renown as a religious scholar is what his contemporary, Dawādārī (in *ad-Durr al-fākhir*), notices about him, since he says he was a traditionist (*muḥaddith*), and remarks that "he had a great funeral the likes of which had never been witnessed before" (*op. cit.*, p. 206). On the location of his tomb, cf. *Nujūm*, VIII, 280, Note 1. On the *karāmāt* associated with his tomb, see Nabhānī, *Jāmi' karāmāt al-awliyā'*, II, 25 ff.

<sup>2</sup> His full name was Sharaf ad-Dīn Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn 'Umar ibn Ibrāhīm al-Iskandarī ash-Shādhilī: see Aḥmad Bābā, *Nayl* (on margin of *Dibāj*, p. 116); Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, I, 562 (where the death date is given as 733/1333); *DK*, II, 100-101 (where the information is conjectural and the death-date is 715/1315). He also goes by the names of Ibn Bākhilā, or Ibn Mākhilā, or al-Bākhilā, but the one given above seems his usual name. His major Ṣūfī work is *'Uyūn al-ḥaqā'iq* (MŠ Berlin, Ahlwardt, no. 3019, 71 folios). Sha'rānī, in his *Tabaqāt*, I, 163 ff., gives extracts from it.



Maylaq (d. 749/1349), a preacher and transmitter of *ḥadīths* who became well known as a shaykh of Ṣūfism.<sup>1</sup> Amongst the religious scholars of the epoch who were disciples of his, mention should be made of the great Taqī d-Dīn as-Subkī (d. 756/1355), the Shāfi'ī *muftī* and theologian, who always held his master in great reverence.<sup>2</sup>

While Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was not a prolific author, he did manage to write works on Ṣūfism that have endured throughout the centuries. Since he was the first of the early Shādhilī masters to put pen to paper, one can only surmise that his reason for doing so was the widespread diffusion of the order by his day and the consequent need to clarify its teachings. Other Shādhilī masters were contemporaneous with him but saw fit not to write anything at all, which is not unusual in Ṣūfism. Perhaps by training, perhaps by talent, which he had in great abundance, it was left to him to expound what the order stood for, and this he did with real authority. His major works, constantly published and republished at the present day, attest to this authority.

His principal work is of course the *Kitāb al-Ḥikam*, which will be analyzed later on. It was immediately successful and is considered by subsequent generations as a masterful summary, in easily learned aphorisms, of the truths of the Path.

Next in importance to the *Hikam* is his work *Miftāḥ al-falāḥ wa miṣbāḥ al-arwāḥ* ("The Key of Success and the Lamp of Spirits"), a concise and comprehensive exposition of the Ṣūfī method of Invocation (*dhikr*). It is perhaps the first work in Ṣūfism that gives the general and technical aspects of the *dhikr* in a single book. A short book, the *Miftāḥ* is written in a lucid style replete with citations drawn from the Quran and *ḥadīths*, not to mention the early Ṣūfīs. It was written in the last decade or so of his life and is quite popular in present-day Ṣūfī circles.

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes called Shihāb ad-Dīn ibn al-Maylaq or even al-Maliq. On him see *Nujūm*, X, 242; *Husn*, I, 319; Yāfi'i, *Nashr al-mahāsīn*, p. 223, and *Mir'āt al-janān*, III, 329-330. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh gives two *hizbs* composed by Maylaq in his *Laṭā'if*, II, 66-72, 72-72, and even refers to him as the polar saint of the gnostics (*qutb al-'arīfīn*), in *op. cit.*, II, 66.

<sup>2</sup> On him see *GAL*, II, 87-88, Suppl. II, 102-104. Tāj ad-Dīn as-Subkī, in *Tabaqāt*, VI, 165, gives one of his father's poems to Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh wherein Taqī ad-Dīn addresses him as "the teacher of every master and gnostic in Egypt of our time" (line no. 6 from top). In his *Fatāwā*, Taqī ad-Dīn as-Subkī calls him "the spokesman of the Ṣūfī adherents in the manner of the Shādhiliyya" (II, 575).

A companion-piece to the *Hikam* is his *Kitāb at-Tanwīr fī isqāt at-tadbīr* ("Light on the Elimination of Self-Direction"), which is a simple and clear exposition of the Shādhilī approach to the virtues, such as patience, sincerity, hope, love, fear, and the like. But they are all seen as contained in a single synthetic virtue, which is that of "the elimination of self-direction" (*isqāt at-tadbīr*). It is a question of the disciple's aligning his own *tadbīr* with that of God's. The book ends in a series of intimate discourses (*munājāt*) of rare beauty on the matter of *tadbīr*. Since the work contains a reference to the great Tunisian Ṣūfī, Shaykh Abū Muḥammad al-Marjānī (d. 699/1299), followed by the usual formula for the deceased, we may conclude that it was written in the last decade of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's life. The book abounds in citations from the first two masters of the Shādhiliyya.

His biographical work, *Kitāb al-Laṭā'if fī manāqib Abī l-'Abbās al-Mursī wa shaykhihi Abī l-Ḥasan* ("The Subtle Blessings in the Saintly Lives of Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī and His Master Abū l-Ḥasan"), is not so much a reconstruction of their lives as it is a record of what they said. It is somewhat autobiographical in that it has numerous references to the religious and Ṣūfī notables of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's time. Without the *Laṭā'if*, it would be practically impossible to say more than a few lines on the life of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh himself. This work is important for its transmission of the observations of the first masters of the Shādhiliyya, and as such is one of the basic sources for the early period of that order. All future works from Shādhilī masters invariably refer to the *Laṭā'if* for their citations. Apart from its straightforward prose, it contains numerous *ahzāb* from the early Shādhilī masters. It seems to be amongst his last compositions.

His small work, *al-Qaṣd al-mujarrad fī ma'rifat al-Ism al-Mufrad* ("The Pure Goal Concerning Knowledge of the Unique Name"), is likewise written in sober style. It sets out the doctrine of the Supreme Name, *Allāh*, both in itself and in relation to the other Divine Names of God in Islam. There is a veritable metaphysical theory linking all of his exposition of the Divine Names. The *Qaṣd* is not as well known as his previous works, but it figures as part and parcel of the corpus that was handed down as coming from him. Its date of composition is difficult to assess.

His other writings are of minor importance, even though one of them, the *Tāj al-arūs al-ḥāwī li-tahdhīb an-nufūs* ("The Bride's



Crown Containing the Discipline of Souls"), seems still to be quite popular. Composed largely of extracts from his *Hikam*, *Tanwīr*, and *Laṭā'if*, it is a composite work, and this may account for its popularity. It might have been composed by him as a memory aid or a brief synthesis of his other works, but it definitely lacks any interior unity. This might well be one of his last writings.

Apart from the aforementioned titles, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's remaining compositions, such as his *Unwān at-tawfiq fī adab at-ṭariq* ("The Sign of Success Concerning the Discipline of the Path"), a gloss on a poem by Abū Madyan on the relations between master and disciple, are less well known. Of his lost works, we have only the titles.<sup>1</sup>

The legacy of Shaykh Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh is twofold, spiritual and literary. As regards the first, his name occurs in the *silsila* of the Shādhiliyya and this affirms his mastership of the Path. From the Ṣūfī viewpoint, this spiritual legacy of his was his real contribution. In other words, he realized in himself the truths taught him by his own master and then, as a master himself, taught them to others, some of whom would become teachers in their own turn. This is indeed the on-going legacy of Ṣūfism, as the heart of Islam, its constantly relived essence.

As regards the second legacy, the literary one, we can easily see his importance, historically speaking. He was the first of the Shādhili masters to set down in writing the doctrines of the Shādhili teachers. Because he had a real gift for summarizing in clear and simple fashion the main theses of Ṣūfism, his works have had a perennial value for the Muslim world. His style together with the ring of authority in his words, have always drawn many seekers to his works throughout the long centuries that separate us from his death in 709/1309.

<sup>1</sup> In *Husn*, I, 301, Suyūṭī gives the titles of a couple of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's works that seem lost at the present day.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE KITĀB AL-ḤIKAM

Of all the works written by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, the *Hikam* is certainly the most admired by later generations of Muslims. References to it as a "book" in his other works, or citations of this or that aphorism in them, prove his authorship.<sup>1</sup> As it stands, however, the *Hikam* was evidently dictated by Shaykh Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh to one of his disciples, perhaps while commenting on the meaning of its contents as he went along. This disciple was none other than the distinguished Shāfi'ī jurist Taqī ad-Dīn as-Subkī (d. 756/1355). The Shādhili master Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) got five of the works of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, including the *Hikam*, from the Shāfi'ī jurist and historian Shams ad-Dīn as-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), who also gave him the *isnād*, which begins with Taqī ad-Dīn as-Subkī.<sup>2</sup>

It would appear that the *Hikam* was the very first composition of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, written at some moment when his master Shaykh Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī (d. 686/1288) was still living. Inasmuch as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh met him for the first time in 674/1276, the work was

<sup>1</sup> In the *Tanwīr*, p. 69, he cites the first aphorism of his *Hikam*, saying, "And in a remark which we wrote in another book..." just before the citation. This shows that the *Hikam* was written by him as a book originally, though its present form was clearly dictated. Another aphorism is cited in *Tanwīr*, p. 6, preceded by the phrase "And in a remark which we have recorded in another book" (*fī ghayr hādihā 'l-kitāb*), which backs up what has just been said, as does the *Laṭā'if*, I, 207, where still another aphorism from the *Hikam* is cited, preceded by the phrase "And in a book (*kitāb*) of ours..." (*wa fī kitāb min kalāminā*). In the *Unwān*, p. 19, just before citing one of his aphorisms, he notes, "And for that reason, I have said in the *Hikam*..." (*qultu fī 'l-Hikam*). His *Tāj al-'arūs* has scores of aphorisms drawn from the *Hikam*. Hājji Khalifa, in *Kashf az-ẓunūn*, III, 82, records the admiration of Shaykh Abū l-'Abbās al-Mursī when Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh presented him with the *Hikam*.

<sup>2</sup> Zarrūq wrote numerous commentaries on the *Hikam*, about thirty in all. The fifteenth, *al-Futūḥāt ar-raḥmāniyya* (MS Escorial, no. 738, 191 folios), contains the statement that he received five of the works of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh from Sakhāwī at the latter's home in Cairo in the year 876 A.H. (folio 9b). In another of his commentaries, *Miftāḥ al-faḍā'il* (MS Escorial, no. 776, 156 folios), he tells us that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's works have been transmitted through two *isnāds*, one correct and one incorrect (folio 4b), but he gives only the correct *isnād*, which begins with Taqī ad-Dīn as-Subkī.



composed therefore within that twelve-year span of time. One might look upon the *Ḥikam* as the fruit of his spiritual realization or as the expression of it in literary form. Ṣūfism tends to scorn those individuals who write on the doctrines of the Path without any authority (*idhn*). Since Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh mentions that all-important point in his *Ḥikam*, we may conclude that the book reflects his role as a master of the Path and with empowerment to speak with full authority.<sup>1</sup> The work itself, of course, by the forcefulness of its expressions and the profundity of conviction it radiates, leaves no doubt in the reader's mind as to the authors' magistracy.

The word *ḥikam* is the plural of *ḥikma*, which means "wisdom," as well as "aphorism," "maxim," or "gnome." Books with similar titles as the *Kitāb al-Ḥikam* of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh are not strange to Arabic literature. The Arabic language, with its rhythmic concision, lends itself to gnomic expressions. The relationship between the terms *ḥikma* and *ma'rifa*, or gnosis, is manifest enough, for both imply a profound knowledge, in this case an experiential or concrete knowledge of the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*). This in turn has its theoretical and realizational aspects, both intimately bound up with one another. In other words, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh wishes to bring out in his work not only the theoretical basis of Ṣūfism, its abstract contours, but also its spiritual repercussions in the soul. He could just as easily have entitled his work *Kitāb al-Ma'rifa*, since that is what it deals with, but the gnomic character of his work led him to give it the title it has.

The *Ḥikam* has been the object of numerous commentaries from the moment it began its circulation. Some of these are listed in Brockelmann's *GAL*, II, 118, Suppl. II, 146. Others can be detected in the works of Shādhilī masters who refer to their own commentaries on it. Generally, the commentators have been of the Shādhilī line. A certain homogeneity of outlook results, and this makes for an easier comprehension of the work inasmuch as the technical

<sup>1</sup> As he says in no. 185 of his *Ḥikam*, "Sometimes the lights of inner realities will appear eclipsed when you have not been given permission to give expression to them." The great founder of the Darqāwā branch of the Shādhiliyya, Mawlay al-'Arabī ad-Darqāwī (d. 1239/1823), is quoted by the Shādhilī master Ibn 'Ajība (d. 1224/1809) as saying, "I heard the jurist al-Bannānī say, 'The *Ḥikam* of Ibn 'Aṭā' is almost a revelation (*waḥy*). Were it permitted to recite the daily prayer without the Quran, the words of the *Ḥikam* would be allowed'" (*lqāz*, 3-4).

terminology (*iṣṭilāḥāt*) in it is gone over time and again. Moreover, the other books by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, such as the *Tanwīr*, the *Qaṣd*, the *Laṭā'if*, and the *Miftāḥ*, open up still further angles of insight. The *Ḥikam* itself, when properly understood and assimilated, ends up by being its own best commentary.

The phrase *wa qāla raḍiya llāhu 'anhu* ("And he said, may God be pleased with him!") crops up in the text frequently. It is considered by all hands as part and parcel of the received text. It has not escaped the attention of the commentators, for it is quite obvious that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh himself could not have written it. How to account for it? Shaykh Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) prefers to explain its presence in the work as the result of different dictating sessions, the disciple marking off the beginning of each session with the phrase in question, after having heard the explanation given by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh on the contents of the previous session. This seems to be the most satisfactory way of accounting for the phrase in the midst of the text. We need only remind ourselves that the disciple was the jurist and theologian Taqī ad-Dīn as-Subkī (d. 756/1355) a sure guarantee of probity and exactitude.

The *Ḥikam* is a work divisible into three main parts: the aphorisms, the treatises, and the supplications. The spiritual aphorisms or maxims (*ḥikam*, pl. of *ḥikma*) constitute the first part and are the very substance of the whole work, so much so that the other two parts could be relegated to one side. In strict sense, it is only this first part that deserves the name of *ḥikam*, or aphorisms. These consist of short, pithy maxims in felicitous Arabic prose, often rhymed. Individually, the aphoristic sentences can be separated from one another by their content, or they can be loosely grouped together under some dominant theme. Otherwise, they stand and fall as they are, succeeding one another in a circular sequence that does not seem to have, at first glance, any logical order, though of course there is a deeper unity that emerges after a while.

Each aphorism takes for granted a considerable background of Ṣūfī doctrine, lacking which one must proceed with intuition. This holds true even for the technical vocabulary found therein, which is in common circulation amongst the Ṣūfī adherents. The internal structure of the *Ḥikam* is such that it can be likened to a necklace of precious jewels. The jewel-like independence of many of the aphorisms has conferred upon them, in the course of centuries, an existence of their own, a fame of their own. Nevertheless, it is illuminative



gnosis, or *ma'rifa*, that constitutes the inner thread holding the many jewels in place and giving to the work its underlying perspective and unity.

*Ma'rifa* is the basic theme of the book. Its metaphysical postulate is classic in Sufism: the Divine Unity alone is the Absolute or the Infinite or the Real, everything else is relative or finite or unreal. This is the doctrine of the Divine Unity (*tawḥīd*), the foundation of Islam, carried to its ultimate metaphysical conclusion. Seen from the standpoint of the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*), the world is not, it is nothingness, for there is nothing "outside" or "alongside" of the Real. Profound spiritual consequences flow from this doctrine of *tawḥīd* as regards the process of realization itself.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, like others in his epoch, was marked by the

<sup>1</sup> In the *Ḥikam*, no. 15, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh brings out the illusory nature of everything "alongside of" the Divine Unity. While the school of *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("the Oneness of Being") founded by Ibn al-'Arabī could easily cover Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and his Shādhilī order, the term *tawḥīd*, based essentially on the *Shahāda* (*Lā ilāha illā 'llāh*), is more apt to describe his doctrine. See his explanation of the *Shahāda* in *Miftāḥ*, pp. 23-26. As regards the three religious principles of Islam, mentioned in the famous *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, namely, *islām* ("submission"), *imān* ("faith"), and *iḥsān* ("spiritual virtue"), which play such an important role in Ṣūfī teachings, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh takes the *Shahāda* of Islam and applies it to the all-important Ṣūfī technique of the Invocation (*dhikr*): "People are of three categories with respect to the affirmation of God's Oneness (*tawḥīd*) in the Invocation. The first category is general amongst beginners. It is the affirmation of Oneness with the tongue in speech, word, belief, and sincerity by means of the lights in the Testimony of Oneness, 'There is no divinity if it be not God, Muḥammad is the Messenger of God': and that is submission (*al-islām*). The second category is that of the intermediate elect. It is the affirmation of God's Oneness with the heart freely and willingly, in belief and sincerity, and that is faith (*al-imān*). The third category is that of the elect of the elect. It is the affirmation of God's Oneness with the Intellect (*al-'aql*), vision (*'iyān*), certitude (*yaqīn*), and contemplation (*mushāhada*): and that is spiritual virtue (*al-iḥsān*). The Invocation has three stations: the Invocation with the tongue, which is the Invocation of the generality; the Invocation with the heart, which is the Invocation of the elect amongst those having faith; and the Invocation with the Spirit, which is for the elect of the elect, and is the Invocation of the gnostics, who are extinguished from their own Invocation by the contemplation of the One who is their Invoker" (*Qaṣd*, p. 78). The Invocation in question is that of the Supreme Name of God in Islam, *Allāh*, which is the spiritual pillar of the Ṣūfī Path. In his *Miftāḥ*, he treats of the methodical use of other Divine Names too (pp. 34-40). "The Invocation differs in types and numbers. But the Invoked is One and without number" (*Qaṣd*, p. 82).

scholastic terminology of the day, and more particularly by Ash'arism, which he studied under some of its great exponents. One could say of him that, insofar as his theological training was concerned, he was an Ash'arī of the Mālikī school. But one must not be deceived by epithets. He was first and foremost a gnostic (*'ārif*) and only secondarily a theologian. There is a difference in planes of reference which must not be lost sight of when pondering his theses. Gnosis must not be reduced to theology (*kalām*) or philosophy (*falsafa*). He would be the first to say as much.

The aphorisms are not numbered by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh. One could, and one should, number them by way of bringing out their independent existence and defining their separate contours. That is what we have done, making the sum total of aphorisms 262 in number. In addition, some commentators have perceived a kind of grouping of thoughts in the *Ḥikam*. Wherever the phrase "And he said (may God be pleased with him!)" occurs, these commentators discern a break in the subject-matter, a new train of thought about to begin. While such a phrase might have occurred in step with the different periods of dictation (*imlā'*), it is nevertheless true that prolonged acquaintance with the *Ḥikam* can induce in the reader the impression that a particular coloration of thought dominates each section or "chapter." It is no doubt the dominance of the thought that the commentators have in mind when they assign chapters to the work. Otherwise, the division into chapters seems arbitrary, since at times the chapters do not spell out new departures in a sufficiently clear-cut manner. The number of such chapters is 25 in all, more or less evenly spaced amongst the 262 aphorisms.

While numerous previous *shaykhs* of Ṣūfism have composed similarly aphoristic works, none has scored with posterity so impressively as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, at least as regards the Arabic language.<sup>1</sup> Why so? Perhaps the answer lies in the combination of profound Ṣūfī teachings and real charm of language that characterizes the *Ḥikam*. It not only unfolds the integral Ṣūfī doctrine on all levels, but it does so in a manner calculated to appeal to pious

<sup>1</sup> Abū Madyan Shu'ayb al-Maghribī (d. 594/1197), for example, was known for his *Ḥikam*, which Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh studied, but they are much too concise. For example: "The initiate is on his way towards Him, the gnostic moves about in Him" (*Ḥikam*, MS British Museum, no. OR 4273, folio 69b). Maxims of that type tend to be limited to Ṣūfī circles and are not as universal as those of our author.



Muslims in general. The powerful and yet gracious union of thought and language makes of the *Ḥikam* a memorable work of universal appeal. It is perhaps this that sets it apart from all other works of similar nature.

The second part of the *Ḥikam* is made up of four short treatises (*rasā'il*, pl. of *risāla*) written by our author in response to questions posed to him by his disciples. They are couched in a straightforward Arabic style. At first glance, one might suspect that they have been appended to the aphorisms properly so-called by another hand. But this impression is negated by the feeling that they form a welcome interlude between the concise structure of the aphorisms and the equally brief supplications that end the work. In other words, after the long series of aphorisms calling for maximum concentration of mind, the tension is broken by an expansive treatise that relaxes the mind. The treatises form an organic part of the whole.

The third and last part of the *Ḥikam* returns us once again to brief formulations, but this time in the guise of supplications to God or "intimate discourses" (*munājāt*) addressed to Him in confidential fashion. More often than not, they are paradoxical questions asked of the Divinity. Total submission and poverty of spirit on the part of the servant (*abd*) addressing the Lord (*Rabb*) are the main themes of the *munājāt*. Coming after the aphorisms, which have shock value in their very form, and the treatises, which release the pent-up tension generated by the aphorisms, the *munājāt* depict the state of the soul that has found its Center and is receptively open to Heaven and now on intimate terms with its Creator. The contemplative has at last found the eye of the storm in the central axis of his being and is now in a state of peace and serenity: the questions and paradoxical exclamations in the *munājāt* are really for the sake of others, not for himself. This seems a fitting end to the work.

As was said, we have numbered the aphorisms in the *Ḥikam*. This does no particular violence to them, since the numbering is only to delineate what seem to be complete thoughts. Our numbering reaches 262. Shaykh 'Abd al-Majīd ash-Sharnūbī (d. 1322/1904), one of the commentators, counted some 264 aphorisms; but in his *Sharḥ* he does not make use of numbers. Perhaps other translators would number them differently. Be that as it may, and by way of summary, there are 262 aphorisms (in 25 chapters), 4 treatises (*ra-*

*sā'il*), and 34 intimate discourses (*munājāt*). The enumeration serves the practical purpose of referring to specific sections with ease.

In the translation of the *Ḥikam* which follows, a number of texts, both in published and manuscript forms, together with their commentaries, have been used. The *Ḥikam* is remarkably well preserved, due no doubt to its importance as a major Ṣūfī work. There are no variant readings of capital importance. The published version can, of course, have typographical mistakes (the contrary would be unusual), and the manuscript version might be vowelized improperly by an inattentive scribe; but such minor imperfections can be easily hurdled.

For the texts of the *Ḥikam*, the following manuscripts have been used:

- (1) MS Escorial, no. 763.
- (2) MS Escorial, no. 786.

They will serve to control the published text, appended to the commentary on the *Ḥikam* by Shaykh Ibn 'Ajība (d. 1224/1809), *Īqāz al-himam*, perhaps one of the most widely-used glosses.

The commentaries used in understanding the *Ḥikam* are the following:

- (1) 'Abd Allāh ash-Sharqāwī, *Sharḥ al-ḥikam* (on the margin of no. 5).
- (2) 'Abd al-Majīd ash-Sharnūbī, *Sharḥ al-ḥikam* (on the margin of his work, *Sharḥ Tā'iyyat as-sulūk ilā mālik al-mulūk*, in published form).
- (3) Ahmad Zarrūq, *Al-Futūḥāt ar-raḥmāniyya*, MS Escorial, no. 738.
- (4) — — —, *Miftāḥ al-faḍā'il*, MS Escorial, no. 776.
- (5) Ibn 'Abbād ar-Rundī, *Sharḥ al-ḥikam* (published form).
- (6) Ibn 'Ajība, *Īqāz al-himam* (published form).

While Ibn 'Abbād ar-Rundī's commentary is the most widely circulated, the ones written by Ahmad Zarrūq deserve special attention. It must be mentioned that he wrote around thirty different commentaries on the *Ḥikam*, which has to be a record of sorts. Since he tells us that he got the *Ḥikam*, plus other works by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, from the traditionist and historian Shams ad-Dīn as-Sakhāwī with the correct *isnād*, or chain of transmission, we can use the text imbedded in his commentaries to control the afore-



mentioned texts. In particular, MS Escorial, no. 776, his fifteenth commentary, is of great importance in this connection, for we have the original work, signed by Zarrūq himself.

In passing, it might be pointed out that, while Ibn 'Abbād ar-Rundī (d. 792/1390) seems to have been one of the first to gloss the *Ḥikam*, the earliest commentator was the grammarian Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn aṣ-Ṣā'igh (d. 776/1375). His *Tathbūt ma'ālī 'l-himam bi-tabyīn ma'ānī 'l-Ḥikam* (MS India Office, no. 1335) would be, accordingly, the first commentary of the *Ḥikam* that we know of.

In rendering the sense of a passage from the *Ḥikam* into English, due care has been given to the author's doctrine as expounded in his other works. Likewise, the commentators' remarks, especially those of Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) and Ibn 'Ajība (d. 1224/1809), who were masters belonging to the same spiritual line as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, have been well pondered. Some of the maxims are easily understood without comments, or else are understood once we get the "feel" of the *Ḥikam*; others need some commentary, and this we have done.

## THE TRANSLATION OF THE KITĀB AL-ḤIKAM

### CHAPTER I

He said (may God be pleased with him!):

1. One of the signs of relying on one's own deeds is the loss of hope when a downfall occurs.<sup>1</sup>
2. Your desire for isolation (*tajrīd*),<sup>2</sup> even though God has put you in the world to gain a living (*fī 'l-asbāb*), is a hidden passion. And your desire to gain a living in the world, even though God has put you in isolation, is a comedown from supreme aspiration (*al-himma al-'aliyya*).<sup>3</sup>
3. Antecedent intentions (*sawābiq al-himam*) cannot pierce the walls of predestined Decrees (*aswār al-aqdār*).<sup>4</sup>
4. Rest yourself from self-direction (*tadbīr*), for what Someone Else (*ghayruka*) has carried out on your behalf, do not you yourself undertake to do it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One should be detached towards one's actions, not attached to their positive or negative results. We must rely on the Divinity, not on our own actions or deeds.

<sup>2</sup> The word *tajrīd* carries with it the implication of withdrawing from society for contemplative purposes, the one doing so being called a *mutajarrīd*. On the other hand, the one who carries on his contemplative life within society is the *mutasabbib*.

<sup>3</sup> It is not a matter of choice, it is a question of vocation, predetermined by the general tendencies of the individual. One might add that the *shaykh* of an order likewise controls the eventual orientation of the *faqīr*.

<sup>4</sup> Whatever might be one's intentions or aspirations (*himam*), they cannot set aside what Destiny has decreed must take place. The anteriority in time of the intention is likened to an arrow, as it were, that cannot pierce the walls of Destiny, which represent the fixity of predestined decrees.

<sup>5</sup> *Tadbīr* implies egocentric concern for one's direction in life, and more particularly in one's daily existence, to the point where it blots out the obligations due God. In that case, which is self-direction, the *tadbīr* is negative and should be eliminated. But if the planning or direction is in conjunction with God's directives, then it is positive and not an obstacle in the Path, in which case it is not self-direction but Self-direction. It is not so much that all future planning should be set to one side as it is that one should repose in the know-



5. Your striving for what has already been guaranteed to you, and your remissness in what is demanded of you, are signs of the blurring of your intellect (*baṣīra*).<sup>1</sup>

6. If in spite of intense supplication, there is a delay in the timing of the Gift (*al-ʿāṭā*)<sup>2</sup>, let that not be the cause for your despairing. For He has guaranteed you a response in what He chooses for you, not in what you choose for yourself, and at the time He desires, not the time you desire.

7. If what was promised does not occur, even though the time for its occurrence had been fixed, then that must not make you doubt the promise. Otherwise, your intellect will be obscured and the light of your innermost heart (*sarīra*) extinguished.<sup>3</sup>

8. If He opens a door for you, thereby making Himself known, pay no heed if your deeds do not measure up to this. For, in truth, He has not opened it for you but out of a desire to make Himself known to you. Do you not know that He is the one who presented the knowledge of Himself (*taʿarruf*) to you, whereas you are the one who presented Him with deeds? What a difference between what He brings to you and what you present to Him!<sup>4</sup>

9. Actions differ because the inspirations of the states of being differ.<sup>5</sup>

ledge that one's future has already been taken care of by providential arrangements.

<sup>1</sup> This is similar to what *ḥikma* no. 4 points to, but carries things a step further. The seeker's livelihood in this world is already guaranteed to him by Providence: one should flow along with It without undue strain. If such strain is present, and forces the seeker to be remiss in his obligations, such as prayer and the like, his discernment is eventually curtailed.

<sup>2</sup> The "Gift" is the celestial response to the *faqīr*, the "sign" that he is making headway.

<sup>3</sup> Both nos. 6 and 7 treat of the same thing: one must not give way to despair or doubt if things do not go according to one's own choice, for this can cloud the inner eye of the heart.

<sup>4</sup> There is no common measure between the insignificant deeds of the traveler in the Path and the immense results obtained. God may suddenly intervene with intrusions of Self-revelation that seem disproportionately great in relation to the deeds of the individual.

<sup>5</sup> The inspirations (*wāridāt*) affect the spiritual state (*ḥāl*) of the soul in terms of expansion, contraction, intimacy with God, and the like; but these are all interior. They nevertheless manifest themselves in exterior actions, which are expressions, necessarily varied, of the different interior states.

10. Actions are lifeless forms (*ṣuwar qāʿima*), but the presence of an inner reality of sincerity (*sirr al-ikhhlās*) within them is what endows them with life-giving Spirit.

11. Bury your existence in the earth of obscurity, for whatever sprouts forth, without having first been buried, flowers imperfectly.

12. Nothing benefits the heart more than a spiritual retreat wherein it enters the domain of meditation (*maydān fikra*).<sup>1</sup>

13. How can the heart be illumined while the forms of creatures are reflected in its mirror?<sup>2</sup> Or how can it journey to God while shackled by its passions? Or how can it desire to enter the Presence of God (*ḥaḍratu ʿllāh*) while it has not yet purified itself of the stain of its forgetfulness? Or how can it understand the subtle points of mysteries (*daqāʿiq al-asrār*) while it has not yet repented of its offenses?

14. The Cosmos (*al-kawn*) is all darkness. It is illumined only by the manifestation of God (*zuhūr al-Ḥaqq*) in it. He who sees the Cosmos and does not contemplate Him in it or by it or before it or after it is in need of light and is veiled from the sun of gnosis by the clouds of created things (*al-āthār*).<sup>3</sup>

15. That which shows you the existence of His Omnipotence is that He veiled you from Himself by what has no existence alongside of Him.<sup>4</sup>

16. How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the one who manifests everything (*aẓhara kulla shayʿ*)?

<sup>1</sup> The "earth of obscurity" here is self-effacement, the opposite of all individualism, which bloats the ego.

<sup>2</sup> The "heart" is not only the luminous center where the ray of the Spirit meets the plane of the soul but also, in fallen man, the seat of passions, sentiments, and ignorance. The combat that takes place in a spiritual retreat is between the Spirit and the soul to determine which shall govern the heart. To the extent that the Spirit prevails, the heart benefits.

<sup>3</sup> The darkness of the Cosmos symbolizes its non-existence, its nothingness. Whatever exists, therefore, derives its being from the Origin of all being, God. Not to see this unique Source behind the multiplicity of things implies the "veiling" of one's intelligence. Note the equation of darkness with nothingness, light with existence.

<sup>4</sup> The idea that the world has a separate reality "alongside" that of the Real is an illusion, a "veiling," for there cannot be two ultimate Realities, which would be contrary to *tawḥīd*.



How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the one who is manifest through everything (*ṣahara bi-kulli shay'*)?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the one who is manifest in everything (*ṣahara fī kulli shay'*)?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the Manifest to everything (*az-Zāhir li-kulli shay'*)?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He was the Manifest (*az-Zāhir*) before the existence of anything (*qabla wujūd kulli shay'*)?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is more manifest than anything (*aẓhar min kulli shay'*)?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the One (*al-Wāḥid*) alongside of whom there is nothing?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is nearer to you than anything else?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since, were it not for Him, the existence of everything would not have been manifest?

It is a marvel how Being (*al-wujūd*) has been manifested in non-being (*al-'adam*) and how the contingent (*al-ḥādith*) has been established alongside of Him who possesses the attribute of Eternity (*waṣf al-qidam*)!<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER II

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

17. He who wishes that at a given moment there appear other than what God has manifested in it, has not left ignorance behind at all!

18. Your postponement of deeds till the time when you are free is one of the frivolities of the ego (*ru'ūnāt an-naḥs*).

19. Do not request Him to get you out of a state to make use of

<sup>1</sup> This entire *ḥikma* seeks to smash the illusion mentioned in no. 14, except that the origin of the veiling there is in God's Omnipotence, His magical power to produce something that does not really exist "alongside" of Him, whereas here the origin of the veiling is in the individual as such, who does not see that nothing whatsoever can veil the One (*al-Wāḥid*).

you in a different one, for, were He to desire so, He could make use of you as you are, without taking you out!

20. Hardly does the intention of the initiate (*himmat sālik*) want to stop at what has been revealed to him, than the voices of Reality (*hawāṭif al-Ḥaqīqa*) call out to him: "That which you are looking for is still ahead of you!" And hardly do the exterior aspects of created beings display their charms, than their inner realities call out to him: "We are only a trial, so disbelieve not!"<sup>1</sup>

21. Your requesting Him is suspecting Him. Your seeking Him is due to your absence from Him. Your seeking someone else is because of your immodesty towards Him. Your requesting someone else is on account of your distance (*bu'd*) from Him.<sup>2</sup>

22. Not a breath (*nafas*) do you expire but a decree of Destiny has made it go forth.

23. Do not look forward to being free of alterities (*al-aghyār*),<sup>3</sup> for that is indeed what cuts you off from vigilant attention (*al-murāqaba*) to Him in that very state He has assigned to you.

24. So long as you are in this world, be not surprised at the

<sup>1</sup> Quran 2:102. In other words, the early fruits of the Path do not constitute the end; there is still more to come. The exterior beauties, or "charms," of things are only indicative of their interior realities, that are much more "real." One must push on in the process of interiorization and not stop at external things.

<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that the servant (*'abd*) should not petition God for this or that; rather, he should not do so while thinking that he has been neglected, for he is constantly under surveillance. Nor should one betake oneself to creatures with the idea of seeking their aid, as if somehow this aid were apart from God's help, or as if this seeking could be accomplished with flattery and hypocrisy. On the contrary, His intervention operates in all domains; hence, one must be aware of this at all moments, and being aware of this, one must maintain a correct attitude vis-à-vis God.

<sup>3</sup> The word "alterities" implies multiplicity, which is a characteristic of the world. It refers to all that which preoccupies the heart and prevents it from being exclusively attentive towards the Divine Presence. The world being multiple by its very nature, there is no point in looking forward to freedom from its attractive pull; rather one should be vigilantly attentive *now* to the Presence in the heart, for that is what really counts.



existence of sorrows. For, truly, it manifests nothing but what is in keeping with its character or its inevitable nature.<sup>1</sup>

25. No search pursued with the help of your Lord remains at a standstill, but any search pursued by yourself will not be fruitful.

26. Amongst the signs of success at the end is the turning to God at the beginning.

27. He who is illumined at the beginning is illumined at the end.

28. Whatever is deposited in the invisible world of innermost hearts (*ghayb as-sarā'ir*) is manifested in the visible world of phenomena (*shahādat az-zawāhir*).

29. What a difference between one who proceeds *from* God in his argumentation and one who proceeds *inferentially to* Him! He who has Him as his starting-point knows the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*) as It is, and proves any matter by reference to the being of its Origin. But inferential argumentation comes from the absence of union with Him. Otherwise, when was it that He became absent that one has to proceed inferentially to Him? Or when was it that He became distant that created things (*al-āthār*) themselves will unite us to Him?<sup>2</sup>

30. Those who are united with Him: "Let him who has abundance spend out of his abundance."<sup>3</sup> Those who are voyaging to-

<sup>1</sup> This *ḥikma* is related to no. 23, for it spells out the nature of the world, which is not God. Not being, on its own plane, the Divinity, it is necessarily compounded of joys and sorrows, for God alone is pure bliss. Useless is it, then, to wish an absolute perfection for the world: not being God, it cannot but be imperfect. If it were perfect, it would be God, which is an impossibility, for there are not two "Gods."

<sup>2</sup> Gnosis takes its point of departure with the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*) in Itself, not with the Creation (*al-khalq*); it therefore works downwards to the world, not upwards from the world to God, as would be the case for the theologians and philosophers or others, who argue from the imperfection of things to the Perfection of God, from multiplicity (*al-āthār*) to the Divine Unity. But their argumentation is defective, for God is not "absent" at any given moment that one has to prove Him inferentially, nor is He so "distant" that it is via multiplicity that one must reach Him. On the contrary, He is present and near. We should start with Him, not with the world.

<sup>3</sup> Quran 65:7.

wards Him: "And whoever has his means of subsistence straitened to him..."<sup>1</sup>

31. Those who are voyaging to Him are guided by the lights of their orientation (*tawajjuh*), whereas those who are united to Him have the lights of face-to-face confrontation (*muwājah*). The former belong to their lights, whereas the lights belong to the latter, for they belong to God and not to anything apart from Him. "Say: *Allāh*! Then leave them prattling in their vain talk."<sup>2</sup>

### CHAPTER III

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

32. Your being on the lookout for the vices (*al-'uyūb*) hidden within you is better than your being on the lookout for the invisible realities (*al-ghuyūb*) veiled from you.

33. The Real (*al-Ḥaqq*) is not veiled from you. Rather, it is you who are veiled from seeing It, for, were anything to veil It, then that which veils It would cover It. But if there were a covering to It, then that would be a limitation of Its Being: every limitation of anything has power over it. "And He is the Omnipotent, above His servants."<sup>3</sup>

34. Amongst the attributes of your human nature, draw away from every one that is incompatible with your servanthood, so that you may be responsive to the call of God and near His Presence.

35. The source of every disobedience, indifference, and passion is self-satisfaction. The source of every obedience, vigilance, and

<sup>1</sup> Quran 65:7. Those who have reached the end of the Path are blessed with graces and knowledge that they diffuse amongst others spontaneously; those who are still voyaging do not have this superabundance of spiritual wealth.

<sup>2</sup> Quran 6:92. The lights of "orientation" (*tawajjuh*) are the lights associated with the stations of *islām* ("submission") and *imān* ("faith"), whereas the lights of "confrontation" (*muwājah*) are those associated with the station of *ihsān* ("spiritual virtue"). The last-named station deals with God in Himself, everything else being prattling and vain talk.

<sup>3</sup> Quran 6:18. God being Infinite, nothing can limit Him, for there are not two Infinities. The Real cannot therefore be veiled by anything whatsoever; it is the individual who is veiled; his fallen nature leads him to believe that "something" can veil the Real, but this is an illusion.



virtue is dissatisfaction with one's self. It is better for you to keep company with an ignorant man dissatisfied with himself than to keep company with a learned man satisfied with himself. For what knowledge is there in a self-satisfied scholar? And what ignorance is there in an unlearned man dissatisfied with himself?

36. The ray of light of the intellect (*shu'ā'u 'l-baṣīra*) makes you witness His nearness to you. The eye of the intellect (*'ayn al-baṣīra*) makes you witness your non-being (*'adam*) as due to His Being. The Truth of the intellect (*Ḥaqq al-baṣīra*) makes you witness His Being, not your non-being nor your being.<sup>1</sup>

37. "God was, and there was nothing with Him, and He is now as He was."<sup>2</sup>

#### CHAPTER IV

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

38. Let not the intention of your aspiration shift to what is other than He, for one's hopes cannot outstrip the Generous (*al-Karīm*).

39. Appeal to no one but Him to relieve you of a pressing need that He Himself has brought upon you. For how can someone else remove what He has imposed? And how can he who is unable to free himself of a pressing need free anyone else of one?

<sup>1</sup> This is an important *ḥikma*, for it deals with one of the classic ternaries of Ṣūfism that is in turn related to other ternaries arranged in hierarchic order. This is unusual in the *Ḥikam*, in that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh generally does not bother with the description of the beginning or most inferior element in any ternary he has in mind, but confines himself to the superior elements, the last two. For example, the ray of light of the intellect (*shu'ā'u 'l-baṣīra*) has to do with the doctrinal or theoretical knowledge of certitude (*'ilm al-yaqīn*); the eye of the intellect (*'ayn al-baṣīra*) deals with the opening of the heart's eye to the Real, or the stages of realization, the eye of certitude (*'ayn al-yaqīn*); and the Truth of the intellect (*Ḥaqq al-baṣīra*) deals with the Truth of certitude (*Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*), the end of the Path.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes this *ḥikma* is united with the previous one, by way of describing the Truth of the intellect, the last stage in the Path, which implies the realization that there is nothing outside of the Real. But it can also stand alone, in which case it is not a *ḥikma*, but rather a saying widely circulated amongst the Ṣūfis and indicative of the absoluteness of the Real in Itself, without associates.

40. If you have not improved your thinking of Him because of His nature, improve it because of His treatment of you. For has He accustomed you to anything but what is good? And has He conferred upon you anything but His favors?

41. How astonishing is he who flees from what is inescapable and searches for what is evanescent! "For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts."<sup>1</sup>

42. Travel not from creature to creature, otherwise you will be like a donkey at the mill: roundabout he turns, his goal the same as his departure. Rather, go from creatures (*al-akwān*) to the Creator (*al-Mukawwin*): "And that the final end is unto thy Lord."<sup>2</sup> Consider the Prophet's words (God bless him and grant him peace!): "Therefore, he whose flight is for God and His Messenger, then his flight is for God and His Messenger; and he whose flight is for worldly gain or marriage with a woman, then his flight is for that which he flees to." So understand his words (upon him peace!) and ponder this matter, if you can. And peace on you!

#### CHAPTER V

And he said (God be pleased with him!):

43. Do not keep company with anyone whose state does not inspire you and whose speech does not lead you to God.

44. You might be in a bad state; then, your associating with one who is in a worse state makes you see virtue (*al-iḥsān*) in yourself.

45. No deed arising from a renouncing heart is small, and no deed arising from an avaricious heart is fruitful.

46. Good works are the results of good states. Good states arise from the stations wherein those having spiritual realization (*at-taḥaqquq*) abide (*maqāmat al-inzāl*).

<sup>1</sup> Quran 22:46. The "heart" is the clouded intelligence that does not discern the relativity of the world and its impermanence and that the decrees of Destiny cannot be eluded. There is a blindness in such a heart.

<sup>2</sup> Quran 53:42. The person occupied with creatures and not with the Creator is trapped in multiplicity, and round and round he goes, without exit. The *ḥadith* of the Prophet that is cited points out the importance of intention (*niyya*) in the Path: one must deepen it, with God in view.



47. Do not abandon the invocation (*adh-dhikr*) because you do not feel the Presence of God therein. For your forgetfulness of the invocation of Him is worse than your forgetfulness in the invocation of Him. Perhaps He will take you from an invocation with forgetfulness (*ghafla*) to one with vigilance (*yaqaza*), and from one with vigilance to one with the Presence of God (*ḥuḍūr*), and from one with the Presence of God to one wherein everything but the Invoked (*al-Madhkūr*) is absent. "And that is not difficult for God."<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

And he said (God be pleased with him!):

48. A sign of the heart's death is the absence of sadness over the acts of obedience that you have neglected and the abandonment of regret over the mistakes that you have made.

49. Let no sin (*dhanb*) reach such proportions in your eyes that it cuts you off from having a good opinion of God, for, indeed, whoever knows his Lord considers his sin as paltry next to His generosity.

50. There is no minor sin (*saghīra*) when His justice confronts you; and there is no major sin (*kabīra*) when His grace confronts you.

51. No deed is more fruitful for the heart than the one you are not aware of and which is deemed paltry by you.

52. He only made an inspiration (*wārid*) come upon you so that you would go (*wārid*) to Him.

53. He made an inspiration come upon you so as to get you out of the grip of alterities (*min yadi 'l-aghyār*) and free you from bondage to created things (*min riqqi 'l-āthār*).

54. He made an inspiration come upon you so as to take you

<sup>1</sup> Quran 14:20. The invocation (*dhikr*) in question is the primary spiritual means of realization in Sūfism. It means the invocation, in permanent fashion, of a Divine Name of God in Islam, and especially of the Supreme Name, *Allāh*, with the permission and guidance of a Sūfī *shaykh*. Here he describes the different initiatic stages of the invocation.

out of the prison of your existence to the unlimited space of your contemplation (*ilā faḍā'i shuhūdika*).

55. Lights (*al-anwār*) are the riding-mounts (*maṭāyā*) of hearts and of their innermost centers (*al-asrār*).

56. Light is the army of the heart, just as darkness is the army of the soul. So when God wishes to come to the help of His servant, He furnishes him with armies of Lights (*junūd al-anwār*) and cuts off from him the reinforcements of darkness and alterities (*madad az-zulm wa'l-aghyār*).

57. Insight (*al-kashf*) belongs to the Light (*an-nūr*), discernment (*al-ḥukm*) to the intellect (*al-baṣīra*), and both progression (*al-iqbāl*) and retrogression (*al-idbār*) belong to the heart (*al-qalb*).

58. Let not obedience make you joyous because it comes from you, but rather, be joyous over it because it comes from God to you. "Say: In the grace of God and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice. It is better than that which they hoard."<sup>1</sup>

59. He prevents those who are voyaging to Him from witnessing their deeds and those who are united with Him from contemplating their states. He does that for the voyagers because they have not relized sincerity (*aṣ-ṣidq*) towards God in those works; and He does that for those united with Him because he makes them absent from contemplating those states by contemplating Him (*bi-shuhūdihi*).

## CHAPTER VII

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

60. Were it not for the seeds of ambitious desire (*tama'*), the branches of disgrace (*aghṣān dhull*) would not be lofty.

61. Nothing leads you like suspicion (*al-wahm*).

62. In your despairing, you are a free man (*ḥurr*); but in your coveting, you are a slave (*'abd*).

63. Whoever does not draw near to God as a result of the

<sup>1</sup> Quran 10:58. We can do nothing without the grace of God.



caresses of love (*mulāṭafāt al-iḥsān*) is shackled to Him with the chains of misfortune (*salāsil al-imtiḥān*).

64. Whoever is not thankful for graces (*an-ni'am*) runs the risk of losing them, and whoever is thankful fetters them with their own cords.

65. Be fearful lest the existence of His generosity towards you and the permanence of your bad behavior towards Him not lead you step by step to ruin. "We shall lead them to ruin step by step from whence they know not."<sup>1</sup>

66. It is ignorance on the part of the novice (*murīd*) to act improperly, and then, his punishment being delayed, to say, "If this had been improper conduct, He would have cut off help (*imdād*) and imposed exile (*bi'ād*)."<sup>2</sup> Help (*al-madad*) could be cut off from him without his being aware of it, if only by blocking its increase (*al-mazīd*). And it could be that you are made to abide at a distance (*al-bu'd*) without your knowing it, if only by His leaving you to do as you like.

67. If you see a servant whom God has made to abide in the recitation of litanies (*al-awrād*) and prolonged His help therein, do not disdain what his Lord has given him on the score that you do not detect the signs of gnostics (*siyamu 'l-ārifīn*) on him nor the splendor of God's lovers (*bahjat al-muḥibbīn*). For had there not been an inspiration (*wārid*), there would have been no litany (*wird*).

68. God makes some people abide in the service of Him (*li-khidmatihi*), and He singles out others to love Him (*bi-maḥabbatihi*). "All do we aid—these as well as those—out of the bounty of thy Lord, and the bounty of thy Lord is not limited."<sup>2</sup>

#### CHAPTER VIII

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

69. It is rare that divine inspirations (*al-wāridat al-ilāhiyya*)

<sup>1</sup> Quran 7:182. This is more fully explained in the following *ḥikma* (no. 66).

<sup>2</sup> Quran 17:20. Nos. 68 and 67 deal with the universality of God's providential care for His servants. Note the threefold classification in these two *ḥikmas*, namely, servants, lovers, and gnostics, implying the three ways of approaching the Divinity through fear (*makhāfa*), love (*maḥabba*), and gnosis (*ma'rifa*).

come except suddenly, and this, in order that they be protected from servants' claiming them by virtue of the existence of receptivity (*bi-wujūd al-isti'dād*) on their part.

70. Infer the existence of ignorance in anyone whom you see answering all that he is asked or giving expression to all that he witnesses or mentioning all that he knows.

71. He made the Hereafter (*ad-dār al-ākhirā*) an abode to reward his believing servants only because this world cannot contain what He wishes to bestow upon them and because He deemed their worth too high to reward them in a world without permanence.

72. Whoever finds the fruit of his deeds (*thamarāt 'amalihi*) coming quickly (*'ājil*) has proof of the existence of acceptance (*al-qabūl*).<sup>1</sup>

73. If you want to know your standing with Him, look at where He has made you abide now.

74. When He gives you obedience (*aṭ-ṭā'a*), making you unaware of it because of Him, then know that He has showered you liberally with His graces both inwardly and outwardly.

#### CHAPTER IX

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

75. The best that you can seek from Him is that which He seeks from you.

76. One of the signs of delusion is sadness over the loss of obedience coupled with the absence of resolve to bring it back to life.

77. The gnostic (*al-ārif*) is not one who, when he makes a symbolic allusion, finds God nearer to himself than his allusion (*ishāra*). Rather, the gnostic is he who has no symbolic allusion due to his self-extinction in His Being (*li-fanā'ihī fī wujūdihi*) and self-absorption in contemplating Him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "acceptance" here means God's acceptance.

<sup>2</sup> The "symbolic allusion" refers to words or phrases representing the Divinity, such as the feminine name Laylā (for the attractive pull of Heaven),



78. Hope (*ar-rajā'*) goes hand in hand with deeds, otherwise it is a wish (*umniyya*).

79. That which the gnostics seek from God is sincerity in servanthood (*al-'ubūdiyya*) and performance of the claims of Lordship (*ar-rubūbiyya*).

80. He expanded you so as not to keep you in contraction (*al-qabḍ*), and contracted you so as not to keep you in expansion (*al-baṣṭ*), and He took you out of both so that you not belong to anything apart from Him.<sup>1</sup>

81. It is more dreadful for gnostics to be expanded than to be contracted, for only a few can stay within the limits of proper conduct (*ḥudūd al-adab*) in expansion (*f 'l-baṣṭ*).

82. Through the existence of joy the soul gets its share in expansion, but there is no share for the soul in contraction.

83. Sometimes He gives while depriving you, and sometimes He deprives you in giving.

84. When He opens up your understanding of deprivation (*al-man'*), the deprivation becomes the same as the gift (*al-aṭā'*).

85. Outwardly, creatures (*al-akwān*) are an illusion (*ghirra*), but, inwardly, they are an admonition (*'ibra*). Thus, the soul looks at the illusory exterior (*zāhiri ghirratiḥā*) while the heart looks at the admonitory interior (*bāṭini 'ibratiḥā*).<sup>2</sup>

wine (for gnosis), the sun (for the intellect), and so forth. The *ḥikma* does not mean that gnostics do not use symbolic allusions, for all Sūfis do. It means that he who is in the state of self-extinction is not aware of himself, let alone his allusion.

<sup>1</sup> Contraction and expansion are spiritual states of being, though they do have psychological repercussions, such as sadness and joy. They are alternating states along the Path, similar in their succession to the cycles of nights and days. Contraction is related to the fear (*khawf*) of God, expansion to hope (*rajā'*) in God; and on a higher plane, contraction has to do with the Divine Majesty or Rigor (*al-Jalāl*), expansion with the Divine Beauty (*al-Jamāl*), two aspects of the Divine Unity. But he who has reached the Unity Itself is not subject any longer to the alternance of the states of contraction and expansion.

<sup>2</sup> Once again, as in no. 20, he draws attention to the exterior and interior aspects of things, the soul or the ego attaching itself to the exterior forms, the heart or the intelligence going straight to their interior essences.

86. If you want a glory (*'izz*) that does not vanish, then do not glory in a glory that vanishes.

87. The real journey (*aṭ-ṭayy al-ḥaqīqī*) is when the world's dimension (*masāfat ad-dunyā*) is rolled away from you so that you see the Hereafter closer to you than yourself.

88. A gift from man is deprivation (*al-ḥirmān*), and deprivation (*al-man'*) from God is beneficence (*al-iḥsān*).

## CHAPTER X

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

89. Far be it for our Lord to recompense with credit the servant who deals with Him in cash.

90. Suffice it as a recompense to you for obedience that He has judged you worthy of obedience.

91. It suffices as a reward for the doers of good that He has inspired obedience to Him in their hearts and brought upon them the existence of His reciprocal intimacy (*mu'ānasa*).

92. Whoever worships Him for something he hopes for from Him, or in order to stave off the arrival of chastisement (*al-'uqūba*), has not concerned himself with the real nature of His Attributes (*bi-ḥaqqi awṣāfiḥi*).

93. When He gives, He shows you His kindness (*birr*); when He deprives, He shows you His power (*qahr*). And in all that, He is making Himself known to you and coming to you with His gentleness.

94. Deprivation (*al-man'*) hurts you only because of the lack of your understanding of God in it.

95. Sometimes He opens the door of obedience for you but not the door of acceptance; or sometimes He condemns you to sin, and it turns out to be a cause of arriving at Him.

96. A disobedience that bequeathes humiliation and extreme need is better than an obedience that bequeathes self-infatuation and pride.



97. There are two graces (*ni'matān*) from which no being can be separated and that are inevitable for every creature: the grace of existence (*al-ijād*), and the grace of sustenance (*imdād*).

98. He bestowed His grace upon you, first, through giving you being (*bi 'l-ijād*), and, second, through uninterrupted sustenance (*bi-tawālī 'l-imdād*).

99. Your indigence (*fāqa*) belongs to you essentially, for accidents do not abolish essential indigence: the trials that arrive in this world are but reminders to you of what you ignore of indigence.<sup>1</sup>

100. The best of your moments is the one wherein you witness the existence of your indigence and, through it, arrive at the existence of your lowliness (*dhilla*).

101. When He alienates you from His creatures, then know that He wants to open for you the door of intimacy with Him.

102. When He loosens your tongue with a request, then know that He wants to give you something.

103. The imperative need (*al-idtirār*) of the gnostic never vanishes, nor is his repose (*qarār*) in anyone but God.<sup>2</sup>

104. He illumined exterior phenomena (*aẓ-ẓawāhir*) with the lights of His created things (*āthār*); and He illumined the innermost hearts (*as-sara' ir*) with the uncreated lights of His attributes (*bi-anwār awṣāfihī*). For that reason, the lights of exterior phenonema set, whereas the lights of hearts (*al-qulūb*) and of the of innermost hearts (*as-sarā'ir*) do not set. That is why it is said, "Verily, the sun of the day sets at night, but the Sun of hearts (*shams al-qulūb*) never sets!"

<sup>1</sup> Human nature is totally dependent for its continued existence on God in an essential manner, as was pointed out in nos. 97 and 98. The two graces of existence (*ijād*) and sustenance (*imdād*), if withdrawn, would reduce us to nothingness; hence our indigence is total. The "accidents" referred to are such things as well-being, health, and the like, which do not abolish the essential indigence of man. The trials that come over us, such as illness and suffering, are but to remind us of this essential indigence that we tend to ignore.

<sup>2</sup> It never vanishes because he knows that he is nothing, nor can he repose in anyone or anything but God for there is nothing "outside" of God.

## CHAPTER XI

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

105. To soften for you the suffering of affliction, He has taught you that He is the One who causes trials to come upon you (*al-Mubli laka*). For the one who confronts you with His decrees of Fate (*al-aqdār*) is the same who has accustomed you to His good choice (*ḥusn al-ikhtiyār*).

106. Whoever supposes that His gentleness (*lutf*) is separate from His decree of Fate (*qadar*) does so out of shortsightedness.

107. It is not feared that the ways leading to God be confusing to you, but rather, it is feared that passion overcome you.

108. Praise be to Him who has hidden the inner reality of holiness (*sirr al-khuṣūṣiyya*) by manifesting the quality of human nature (*bi-ẓuhūr waṣf al-bashariyya*), and who has appeared in the sublimity of Lordship (*ʿaẓamat ar-rubūbiyya*) by manifesting servanthood (*al-'ubūdiyya*)!<sup>1</sup>

109. Do not press claims against your Lord because your request (*maṭlab*) has been delayed; instead, press claims against yourself for slackening in your behavior.

110. When He makes you submissive to His command outwardly and provides you with resignation to His power inwardly, then He has enhanced the greatness of the favor accorded you.

111. Not all who are most certainly amongst the chosen go on to perfect their liberation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "inner reality of holiness" refers to the reality of gnosis, which is veiled and protected by the enveloping human nature from all stain, perfected human nature acting as a sanctuary or temple. "Lordship" has to do with the quality of God as Lord of the Creation; its complementary term, as regards man, is "servanthood," the gnostic being the perfect creature or servant of God.

<sup>2</sup> The manifestation of miracles (*karāmāt*) or charismatic signs by a saintly individual is certainly proof of his election; but this does not imply that he possesses the fullness of the Path or that he will go on to perfect his liberation in a total sense.



## CHAPTER XII

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

112. Only the ignorant man scorns the recitation of litany (*al-wird*). Inspiration (*al-wārid*) is to be found in the Hereafter, while the litany vanishes with the vanishing of this world. But it is more fitting to be occupied with something for which there is no substitute. The litany is what He seeks from you, the inspiration is what you seek from Him. But what comparison is there between what He seeks from you and what you seek from Him?

113. The arrival of sustainment (*wurūd al-imdād*) is in accordance with receptivity (*al-isti'dād*), while the raying-out of lights (*shurūq al-anwār*) is in accordance with the purity of the innermost being (*ṣafā'u 'l-asrār*).

114. When the forgetful man (*al-ghāfil*) gets up in the morning, he reflects on what he is going to do, whereas the intelligent man (*al-'āqil*) sees what God is doing with him.

115. The devotees (*al-'ubbād*) and the ascetics (*az-zuhhād*) are alienated from everything only because of their absence from God in everything. For had they contemplated Him in everything, they would not have been alienated from anything.<sup>1</sup>

116. He commanded you in this world to reflect upon His creations (*bi 'n-naẓar fī mukawwanātihi*); but in the Hereafter He will reveal to you the Perfection of His Essence (*kamāl dhātih*).

117. When He knew that you would not renounce Him, He made you contemplate that which issues from Him.

118. Since God (*al-Ḥaqq*) knows of the existence of weariness on your part, He has varied the acts of obedience (*aṭ-ṭā'āt*) for you; and since He knows of the existence of impulsiveness (*ash-sharah*) in you, He has limited them to specific times (*fī 'l-awqāt*), so that your concern be with the performance of the ritual prayer (*iqāmat aṣ-ṣalāt*), not with the existence of the ritual prayer (*wujūd aṣ-ṣalāt*).

<sup>1</sup> Devotees and ascetics are distinguished in this aphorism from the gnostics, who contemplate the Real in all things.

For not everyone who prays performs well (*fa-mā kull muṣall muqīm*).<sup>1</sup>

119. Ritual prayer is a purification for hearts (*tuhra li 'l-qulūb*) and an opening-up of the door of the invisible domains (*al-ghuyūb*).

120. Ritual prayer is the place of intimate discourses and a mine of reciprocal acts of purity wherein the domains of the innermost being are expanded and the rising gleams of light ray out. He knew of the existence of weakness in you, so He made the number of ritual prayers small; and He knew of your need of His grace, so He multiplied their fruitful results.

121. When you seek a recompense for a deed, the existence of sincerity (*aṣ-ṣidq*) in it is demanded of you in return. As for the insincere (*al-murīb*), the feeling of security (*wijdān as-salāma*) from chastisement suffices him.

122. Do not seek recompense for a deed whose doer (*fā'il*) was not you. It suffices you as recompense for the deed that He accepts it.

123. When He wants to show His grace to you, He creates states in you and attributes them to you (*khalaqa wa nasaba ilayk*).

124. Were He to make you go back to yourself, there would be no end to the reasons for blaming you (*li-madhāmmik*); and were He to manifest His beneficence (*iūd*) to you, there would be no end to the reasons for praising you.

## CHAPTER XIII

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

125. Cling to the attributes of His Lordship and realize the attributes of your servanthood!

126. He has prohibited you from claiming for yourself what

<sup>1</sup> "Ritual prayer" refers to the five daily prayers binding on all Muslims by the Law of Islam, and is one of the "five pillars of religion," the others being the Testimony of Faith (*shahāda*), the Pilgrimage (*hajj*), fasting during the month of Ramadan (*ṣiyām*), and the legal alms (*zakāt*); occasionally, a sixth, holy war (*jihād*), is added. One must not confuse ritual prayer with the invocation (*dhikr*), which is the uninterrupted prayer of the heart.



does not belong to you amongst the qualities of created beings; so would He permit you to lay claim to His Attribute, He who is the Lord of the Universe?

127. How can the laws of nature (*al-'awā'id*) be ruptured for you so that miracles result, while you, for your part, have yet to rupture your bad habits (*al-'awā'id*)?<sup>1</sup>

128. The point at issue is not the existence of searching. The point at issue is only that you be provisioned with virtuous conduct (*ḥusn al-adab*).

129. Nothing pleads on your behalf like extreme need, nor does anything speed gifts to you quicker than lowliness and want.

130. If you were to be united with Him only after the extinction of your vices and the effacement of your pretensions, you would never be united with Him. Instead, when He wants to unite you to Himself, He covers your attribute (*wasf*) with His Attribute and hides your quality (*na't*) with His Quality. And thus He unites you to Himself by virtue of what comes from Him to you, not by virtue of what goes from you to Him.

#### CHAPTER XIV

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

131. Were it not for the kindliness of His veiling (*jamīl sitriḥ*), no deed would be worthy of acceptance.

132. You are more in need in His forbearance (*ḥilm*) when you obey Him than you are when you disobey Him.

133. Veiling (*as-sitr*) is of two kinds: veiling of disobedience, and veiling in it. Common people seek God's veiling in disobedience out of the fear of falling in rank amongst mankind. The elect seek the veiling of disobedience out of the fear of falling from the sight of the Real King.

<sup>1</sup> Islam considers miracles as ruptures of the laws of nature (*kharq al-'awā'id*) or of the "habits" of nature. There is a play here on the word "habits." So long as one's own bad habits have not been eliminated, it is useless to aspire to perform miracles.

134. Whoever honors you honors only the beauty of His veil in you. Therefore, praise is to Him who veiled you, not to the one who honored and thanked you.

135. No one is a companion of yours except the one who, while knowing your defects, is your companion, and that is only your generous Lord. The best one to take on as a companion is He who does not seek you out for the sake of something coming from you to Him.

136. Were the light of certitude (*nūr al-yaqīn*) to shine, you would see the Hereafter so near that you could not move towards it, and you would see that the eclipse of extinction had come over the beauties of the world (*maḥāsin ad-dunyā*).

137. It is not the existence of any being alongside of Him (*wujūd mawjūd ma'ah*) that veils you from God, for nothing (*lā shay'a*) is alongside of Him. Rather, the illusion of a being alongside of Him (*tawahhum mawjūd ma'ah*) is what veils you from Him.<sup>1</sup>

138. Had it not been for His manifestation in created beings (*al-mukawwanāt*), eyesight would not have perceived them. Had His Qualities (*ṣifāt*) been manifested, His created beings would have disappeared.<sup>2</sup>

139. He manifests everything because He is the Interior (*al-*

<sup>1</sup> Here the doctrine of illusion is presented to account for the veiling often mentioned in the *Ḥikam* and in other Ṣūfī works. The veiling emanates from this illusion, which fosters the idea that there are two Infinites, two Absolutes, which is associationism (*shirk*), the cardinal sin of Islam. It is the illusion that there is something alongside of or outside of the Real that veils the fallen man from God. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh is well aware of the relative reality of the world and therefore of the degrees of reality; but he is saying that illusion engenders the idea that this relative reality is absolute, which it is not, for it is ultimately reducible to the Divine Reality, the only one that is. This is the deepest content of the Testimony of Faith, *Lā ilāha illā 'llāh* ("There is no divinity but God"), which, in its Ṣūfī guise, would be: "There is no reality but the Divine Reality," and similarly for the other positive qualities of this world.

<sup>2</sup> Without His existention (*ijād*) of beings and things, there would be no creation whatsoever (no macrocosm), and thus there would be no perception of things by an individual (no microcosm). Had His Qualities been manifested in the pure state, instead of being veiled by the degrees of reality, the Creation would have been extinguished.



*Bāṭin*), and He conceals the existence of everything because He is the Exterior (*az-Zāhir*).<sup>1</sup>

140. He has permitted you to reflect on what is *in* created beings, but He has not allowed you to stop at the selfsame creatures. "Say: Behold what is in the heavens and the earth!"<sup>2</sup> Thus, with His words "Behold what is in the heavens" He opened up the door of instruction for you. But He did not say, "Behold the heavens," so as not to lead you to the mere existence of bodies.

141. The Universe (*al-akwān*) is permanent (*thābita*) through His making it permanent (*bi-ithbātih*), and it is annihilated (*mam-huwwa*) by the Unity of His Essence (*bi-aḥadiyyat dhātih*).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The words "the Interior" (*al-Bāṭin*) and "the Exterior" (*az-Zāhir*) are two of the Names of God and are drawn from the Quran: "He is the First and the Last and the Exterior and the Interior" (57:3). This is one of the richest Quranic formulas, much used by the Ṣūfīs. The terms are complementary: when one says "the interior" one implies "the exterior." The Creation is manifested because He is the Interior, the hidden Source from which all manifestation proceeds. On the other hand, the Creation is hidden because He is the Exterior, more manifest or more real than the symbolic nature of the world that points to Him. One should not forget that a Name such as "the Exterior" symbolizes transcendent realities and should not be taken literally: the exterior world is not "the Exterior" in Itself, but only a symbol of It on its own plane, otherwise it would be the same thing, which would be equivalent to abolishing the degrees of reality or of reducing everything created to its Principle. In that case, there would be no exterior world at all, but only "the Exterior," or "the Manifest," that is ontologically prior to Existence. As Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh himself says (in *ḥikma* no. 15), "How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He was the Manifest (*az-Zāhir*) before the existence of anything?"

<sup>2</sup> Quran: 10:101. We meet again the distinction between the interior and exterior aspects of things, as we see in nos. 20 and 85. We must not stop at the forms of things but go straight to their essences, since these alone liberate.

<sup>3</sup> There are two perspectives here, depending on the point of departure. There is, first of all, the perspective of existence as such: the world exists because it derives its reality from God, its Existentiator, its ontological Principle, without which it could not exist at all. Then there is, secondly, the perspective of the Principle as such: the world is not in any way whatsoever because there is nothing "outside" or "alongside" of the Divine Unity or the Essence. On the one hand, the world is relatively real; on the other hand, it is unreal, or even not at all, for only the Divine Unity is the Real.

## CHAPTER XV

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

142. People praise you for what they suppose is in you; but you must blame your soul for what you know is in it.

143. When the believer is praised, he is ashamed before God that he should be lauded for an attribute he does not see in himself.

144. The most ignorant of all people is the one who abandons the certitude (*yaqīn*) he has for an opinion (*ẓann*) people have.

145. When He lets praise of you burst forth, and you are not worthy of it, praise Him for what He is worthy of.

146. When ascetics (*az-zuhhād*) are praised, they are contracted, for they witness the praise as coming from mankind (*al-khalq*); but when gnostics (*al-'ārīfūn*) are praised, they are expanded, for they witness the praise as coming from the Real King.

147. If when given something, the giving expands you, and if when deprived of something, the deprivation contracts you, then take that as the proof of your immaturity and the insincerity of your servanthood.

## CHAPTER XVI

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

148. When you commit a sin (*dhanb*), let it not be a reason for your despairing of attaining to righteousness (*al-istiḳāma*) before your Lord, for that might be the last decreed for you.

149. If you want the door of hope opened for you, then consider what comes to you from Him; but if you want the door of sadness opened for you, then consider what goes to Him from you.

150. Sometimes He makes you learn in the night of contraction (*layl al-qabḍ*) what you have not learned in the radiance of the day of expansion (*fī ishrāq nahār al-baṣṭ*). "You do not know which of them is nearer to you in benefit."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quran 4:11. Compare this aphorism with no. 81 and note the equation of night with contraction and day with expansion.



151. The hearts and the innermost centers of being are the places where lights arise.

152. There is a light deposited in hearts which is nourished by the Light coming from the treasures of the invisible realms.

153. There is a light wherewith He unveils for you His created things (*al-āthār*), and there is a Light wherewith He unveils for you His Attributes (*awṣāf*).<sup>1</sup>

154. Sometimes hearts stop at lights the same way souls are veiled by the opacities of alterities (*bi-kathā'if al-aghyār*).

155. By way of honoring them, He veiled the lights of the innermost hearts (*anwār as-sarā'ir*) with the opacities of exterior phenomena (*bi-kathā'if az-ẓawāhir*) so they would not be abused when expressing themselves nor be accused of seeking renown.

## CHAPTER XVII

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

156. Glory be to Him who has not made any sign leading to His saints save as a sign leading to Himself, and who has joined no one to them except him whom God wants to join to Himself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The distinction here is between physical light, which unveils the sensorial world around us, and spiritual Light which unveils the transcendent realities. The Attributes in question are those which relate to God's Power, Will, Knowledge, Life, and so on. There is also another possible interpretation of this aphorism and this has to do with the tripartite division of spiritual Light. First, there is the light of submission (*nūr al-islām*) which leads to extinction in the Divine Actions (*al-af'āl*, the same in this context as *al-āthār*). Secondly, there is the light of faith (*nūr al-imān*) which leads to extinction in the Divine Attributes. And thirdly, there is the light of excellence or virtue (*nūr al-ihsān*) which leads to extinction in the Divine Essence. The Shaykh stops here with the second degree of Light since it is only one degree removed from extinction in the Essence or because, in relation to the first, it represents a summit. One can see, nevertheless, that there is a gradation, so that the heart might stop at the first or the second and not proceed upwards to the Source of the Light, as he himself says in the next *ḥikma*.

<sup>2</sup> The "saints" mentioned are the *shaykhs* of the Path. Providence guides the seeker to the *shaykh* so that ultimately he be united with God. The sign leading to the *shaykh* is the sign leading to God. There is a relation between this *ḥikma* and no. 155, since there the saintly gnostic's interior lights are veiled by his

157. Sometimes He reveals to you the invisible domain of His Realm but veils you from knowing the secrets of servants.

158. Whoever gets to know the secrets of servants without patterning himself on the divine mercifulness (*ar-raḥma al-ilāhiyya*), finds his knowledge a tribulation (*fitna*) and a cause for drawing evil (*al-wabāl*) upon himself.

159. The ego's share in disobedience is outwardly clear (*ẓāhir jalī*), while its share in obedience is inwardly hidden (*bāṭin khafī*). To cure what is hidden is hard indeed!

160. Sometimes ostentation (*ar-riyā'*) penetrates you in such a way that no one notices it.

161. Your desire that people know your particular distinction (*khuṣṣiyya*) is a proof of insincerity in your servanthood (*'ubūdiyya*).

162. Make mankind's looking at you disappear by being content with God's looking at you! Slip away from their approach to you by contemplating His approach to you!

163. He who knows God (*al-Ḥaqq*) contemplates Him in everything. He who is extinguished by Him is absent from everything. He who loves Him prefers nothing to Him.

164. Only His extreme nearness (*shiddatu qurbih*) to you is what veils God (*al-Ḥaqq*) from you.

165. Only because of the intensity of His manifestation (*shiddatu zuhūrihi*) is He veiled, and only because of the sublimity of His light is He hidden from view.

## CHAPTER XVIII

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

166. Let not your asking be the cause of His giving, for then your understanding of Him might diminish. Let your asking be for the sake of showing servanthood and fulfilling the rights of Lordship.

exterior human nature by way of concealment; hence the real master is difficult to find. Compare, also, this aphorism with no. 108.



167. How can your subsequent asking be the cause of His prior giving?<sup>1</sup>

168. Far be it for the decree of the Eternal (*ḥukmu 'l-azal*) to be subject to contingent causes (*al-'ilal*)!

169. His providential care (*'ināyatuh*) of you is not due to anything coming from you. Where were you when He confronted you with His providence or met you face-to-face with His care? Neither sincerity of deeds nor the existence of states have any being in His Eternity. Instead, only pure bestowing and sublime giving are there.

170. He knew that servants would anticipate the emergence of the mystery of Providence (*sirru 'l-'ināya*) in themselves, so He said, "He chooses whom He pleases for His Mercy."<sup>2</sup> And He knew that, had He left them at that, they would have abandoned all effort by relying on the Eternal, so He said, "Surely the Mercy of God is nigh to the doers of good."<sup>3</sup>

171. Everything depends on the Divine Will (*al-mashī'a*), but It Itself depends on nothing at all.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One's asking takes place in the temporal world, but the giving has been fixed from all Eternity, "before" one asked. Thus, as he says in no. 168, a contingent thing such as asking cannot be the cause of His giving, for in Eternity, which has nothing to do with time past or present, there is only "pure bestowing" and "sublime giving" (no. 169). This is not a rejection of asking, for he has said in no. 166 that one should ask for the sake of showing one's servanthood and fulfilling the rights due to God as Lord, or as the possessor of Lordship. Moreover, one's asking in itself is subject to the Divine Will, as he points out in no. 171 indirectly, when he says that everything depends on the Divine Will, which includes one's asking.

<sup>2</sup> Quran 2:105.

<sup>3</sup> Quran 7:56. Since the care of Providence over its creatures is "already" settled, each one naturally sits back awaiting its emergence in himself; but the Quranic phrase clearly indicates that God chooses this or that person for His Mercy, thus excluding some from His providential care. Lest that provoke a general indifference and abandonment of effort, the Quran pinpoints those who fall under providential care (or Mercy, which amounts to the same thing), namely, "the doers of good" (*al-muḥsinūn*), who are those who have spiritual virtue (*iḥsān*).

<sup>4</sup> Creatures are subject to the Will of their Creator, but His Will is not subject to anything in the Creation.

## CHAPTER XIX

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

172. Sometimes good behavior (*al-adab*) leads some to abandon asking because of confidence in His Providence or because concern for the invocation (*dhikr*) of Him stymies their asking of Him.

173. Only he to whom forgetfulness is possible is to be reminded; and only he to whom inattention is possible is to be warned.

174. The feast-days of novices (*al-murīdūn*) are when states of need arrive.<sup>1</sup>

175. Sometimes you will find more benefit in states of need than you find in fasting or ritual prayer.

176. States of need are gift-laden carpets.

177. If you want gifts to come your way, then perfect the spiritual poverty (*al-faqr*) you have. "Alms are only for the poor."<sup>2</sup>

178. Realize your attributes and He will help you with His Attributes; realize your lowliness and He will help you with His Sublimity; realize your impotence and He will help you with His Power; realize your weakness and He will help you with His Might and Force!

## CHAPTER XX

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

179. Sometimes a charisma (*karāma*) is bestowed upon someone whose righteousness (*al-istiqāma*) is not perfect.

180. A sign that it is God who has put you in a certain state (*fī 'sh-shay*) is that He keeps you in it while its fruits (*an-natā'ij*) mature.

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 174-178 all deal with the question of poverty of Spirit. The "need" or "indigence" of the novice is essential (no. 99); the need is a matter of self-effacement before God.

<sup>2</sup> Quran 9:60. The 'feast-days' and 'gifts' mentioned in nos. 174-177 are all the fruits of the Path, such as intuitions, blessings, virtues, and wisdom. These come to the degree that the ego, through poverty, is extinguished.



181. He who holds forth from the standpoint of his own virtuous behavior will be silenced by misbehavior toward God; but he who holds forth from the standpoint of God's virtuous behavior toward him will not be silenced when he misbehaves.

182. The lights of sages (*anwāru 'l-ḥukamā'*) precede their words, so that, wherever illumination (*at-tanwīr*) occurs, the expression (*at-ta'bīr*) arrives there.

183. Every utterance (*kalām*) that comes forth does so with the vestment of the heart (*kiswatu 'l-qalb*) from which it emerged.

184. Whoever has been given permission to speak out (*at-ta'bīr*) will have his expression (*'ibāra*) understood by his listeners, and his symbolic allusion (*ishāra*) will be clear to them.

185. Sometimes the lights of inner realities will appear eclipsed when you have not been given permission to give expression to them.

186. Their expression (*'ibāratuhum*) is either because of the overflow of ecstasy (*li-layḍāni wajd*) or for the purpose of guiding a disciple (*mutīd*). The former case is that of those who progress (*as-sālikūn*); the latter case is that of those who possess a function (*arbābu 'l-mukna*) and have realization (*al-mutahaqqiqūn*).

187. An expression (*'ibāra*) is nourishment to needy listeners, and your share in it is only what you can eat thereof.

188. Sometimes he who draws near to a station (*maqām*) expresses himself about it, and sometimes he who is united with it expresses himself about it. That is confusing save to him who has insight.

189. He who is progressing (*as-sālik*) should not give expression to his inspirations (*wāridāt*), for that indeed diminishes their activity in his heart and strips him of sincerity with his Lord.

190. Do not stretch out your hand to take from creatures unless you see that the Giver (*al-Mu'ī*) amongst them is your Lord. If such is your case, then take what knowledge says is suitable for you.

191. Sometimes the gnostic (*al-'ārif*) is ashamed of submitting his urgent need (*ḥāja*) to his Lord, being content with His Will

(*mashī'a*). So why should he not be ashamed of submitting his urgent need to a creature of His?

## CHAPTER XXI

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

192. When two matters seem confusing to you, see which is heavier on the ego and follow it through. For, indeed, nothing weighs on the ego but that which is true.

193. A sign of compliance with passion is haste in supererogatory good deeds and sluggishness in fulfilling obligatory deeds.

194. He laid down specific times for acts of obedience so that procrastination not divert you from them, and He made each time span ample so that you would have a share in making the choice.<sup>1</sup>

195. He knew of the irresolution of servants in dealing with Him, so He made obedience (*tā'a*) to Him obligatory for them. Thus, He drove them to obedience with the chains of obligation (*bi-salāsili 'l-ijāb*). Your Lord is amazed at people who are driven to Paradise (*al-janna*) with chains!

196. He made the service (*khidma*) of Him obligatory upon you, which is as much as to say that He made entry into His Paradise obligatory for you.

197. Whoever finds it astonishing that God should save him from his passion or yank him out of his forgetfulness has deemed the divine Power (*al-qudra al-ilāhiyya*) to be weak. "And God has power over everything."<sup>2</sup>

198. Sometimes darknesses come over you in order that He make you aware of the value of His blessings upon you.

199. He who does not know the value of graces when they are present knows their value when they are absent.

<sup>1</sup> The "specific times" have to do with particular ritual observances in Islam, such as the daily prayer at fixed intervals; but these fall within a span of time that permits the pious to choose within it their own moment of performing the prayer.

<sup>2</sup> Quran 18:45.



200. The inspirations of grace should not so dazzle you as to keep you from fulfilling the obligations of thankfulness, for that would indeed bring you down in rank.

201. Incurable sickness results when the sweetness of passion takes possession of the heart.

202. Only an unsettling fear (*khawf muz'ij*) or a restless desire (*shawq muqliq*) can expell passion from the heart.<sup>1</sup>

203. Just as He does not love the deed possessed of associationism, so similarly He does not love the heart possessed of associationism. As for the deed possessed of associationism, He does not accept it; and as for the heart possessed of associationism, He does not draw near to it.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER XXII

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

204. There are lights that are allowed to arrive (*al-wuṣūl*) and lights that are allowed to enter (*ad-dukhūl*).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "unsettling fear" has to do with the Divine Majesty or Rigor (*al-Jalāl*), which forces the novice to abandon his particular passion. The "restless desire" has to do with the Divine Beauty (*al-Jamāl*), which creates an attractive force that pulls him out of his earth-bound passion and directs him upwards.

<sup>2</sup> "Associationism" (*shirk*) is the gravest of errors in Islam. It consists in associating something or someone with God, as if there were two or more Gods. On the plane of the virtues, associationism is the opposite of sincerity (*ikhhlās*), and that is hypocrisy (*nifāq*). The affirmation of the Oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) demands increasing sincerity in the *faqīr*: the false gods in him must go. The deed that is associationist is the one performed without God in view; the heart that is associationist is the one that loves other than God.

<sup>3</sup> The lights that are allowed to arrive belong to those who have faith (*ahl al-īmān*) but whose hearts are not empty of alterities, for their mirrors reflect the forms of created things. So the arriving lights stop outside the heart. The lights that are allowed to enter belong to those who have excellence or virtue (*ahl al-iḥsān*), whose hearts are emptied of all alterities. So these lights enter the very depths of the heart. This is what he goes on to explain in nos. 205-206. One will note that he does not speak of any lights belonging to the people of submission (*ahl al-islām*), perhaps because it is only at the degree of faith (*īmān*) that one can start speaking of "lights" properly so-called, or of real lights in a lofty sense.

205. Sometimes lights come upon you and find the heart stuffed with forms of created things (*suwaru 'l-āthār*); so they go back from whence they descended.

206. Empty your heart of alterities (*al-aghyār*) and you will fill it up with gnostic intuitions (*al-ma'ārif*) and mysteries (*al-asrār*).

207. Do not deem His giving to be slow; but rather, deem your approaching to be slow.

208. It is possible to fulfill some obligations at times, but it is impossible to fulfill the obligations of every moment, for there is no moment wherein God does not hold against you a new obligation or a definite matter. So how can you fulfill therein someone else's obligation when you have not fulfilled God's?

209. That part of your life that has gone by is irreplaceable, and that which has arrived is priceless.

210. You have not loved anything without being its slave, but He does not want you to be someone else's slave.

211. Your obedience does not benefit Him, and your disobedience does not harm Him. It is only for your own good that He commanded the one and prohibited the other.

212. His Sublimity is not increased when someone draws near to Him, and His Sublimity is not decreased when someone draws away from Him.

## CHAPTER XXIII

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

213. Your union with God is union through knowledge of Him (*al-'ilmu bihi*). Otherwise, God is beyond being united with anything or anything being united with Him!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Union with God is a matter of essential identity through gnosis. It consists in following the vertical spiritual ray back to its Source through illuminative knowledge. The essential identity must not be confused with the horizontal planes of reality, the degrees of Reality, for these are stratifications that disallow any continuity between the lower degrees and their Principle, and therefore no substantial identity. These fundamental degrees of Reality, as accepted by Ibn 'Aṭā'illah and Ṣūfism in general, are the material, the psychic, and the



214. Your nearness (*qurb*) to Him is that you contemplate His nearness. Otherwise, what comparison is there between you and the existence of His nearness?

215. The inner realities (*al-ḥaqā'iq*) arrive synthetically (*mujmala*) in the state of illumination (*at-tajallī*), while their explanation (*al-bayān*) comes after retention (*al-wa'y*). "So when We recite it, follow its recitation. Again on Us rests the explaining of it."<sup>1</sup>

216. When divine inspirations come upon you, they demolish your habits. "Surely the kings, when they enter a town, ruin it."<sup>2</sup>

217. The inspiration comes from the Presence of the Omnipotent. As a result, nothing opposes it without being smashed to bits. "Nay, but We hurl the Truth against falsehood, and it prevails against it, and lo! falsehood vanishes."<sup>3</sup>

218. How can God (*al-Ḥaqq*) be veiled by something, for He is apparent (*ẓahir*) and has actual being (*mawjūd ḥāḍir*) in that where-with He is veiled?

219. Do not lose hope in the acceptance of an act of yours wherein you found no awareness of the Divine Presence. Sometimes He accepts an act the fruit of which you have not perceived right away.

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spiritual planes. That which is physical or sensorial in nature, or the material plane, is called the Kingdom (*al-Mulk*), which is the lowest degree and the most limited. That which is subtle or psychic in nature, or the plane of the soul, is called the Realm or the Dominion (*al-Malakūt*), which is hierarchically superior to the *Mulk* and less limited. That which is spiritual in nature, beyond forms or individuations, and therefore limitless, is the Immensity or the Domination (*al-Jabarūt*). These are sometimes conceived of as concentric circles or spheres surrounding a point, which is their luminous Origin. Union with God, in this symbolism, would be effected by following the intellectual or spiritual ray emanating from the Origin and returning to It: it is this which represents essential identity.

<sup>1</sup> Quran 75:18-19. Inspirations arrive synthetically. It is only after retention or assimilation that their explanation can be detailed. The Quranic verse cited is addressed to the Prophet and refers to the revelation (*wahy*) of the Quran. The Ṣūfīs, one might add, do not claim this major degree of revelation, but they do claim inspiration (*ilhām*).

<sup>2</sup> Quran 27:34.

<sup>3</sup> Quran 21:18. Divine inspirations have a purifying effect on the soul; they are also illuminative, since they destroy illusions and falsehood.

220. Do not attest to the validity of an inspiration (*wārid*) whose fruits you know not. The purpose of rainclouds is not to give rain; their only purpose is to bring forth fruit.

221. After the lights of inspirations have rayed out and their mysteries have been deposited, do not seek their continuance, for you have in God one who enables you to dispense with everything; but nothing enables you to dispense with God.

222. The proof that you have not found Him is that you strive for the permanency of what is other than He, and the proof that you are not united to Him is that you feel estranged at the loss of what is other than He.

#### CHAPTER XXIV

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

223. While varied in its manifestations, felicity (*an-na'im*) is only for the sake of contemplating and drawing near to Him; and, while varied in its manifestations, suffering (*al-'adhāb*) is due only to the existence of His veil. Therefore, the existence of the veil is the cause of the suffering, and the perfection of felicity is through the vision of the Countenance of God, the Generous.

224. That which hearts find in the way of worries and sadnesses is due to that which prevents their having inner vision (*al-'iyān*).

225. Part of the completeness of grace (*tamāmu 'n-ni'ma*) accorded you lies in His providing you with what suffices and holding you back from what makes you exceed bounds.

226. So that your sadness over something be little, let your joy in it be little.

227. If you do not want to be dismissed, then do not take charge of a post that will not always be yours.

228. If beginnings make you desirous, endings will make you abstinent: if their exteriors invited you, their interiors will hold you back.

229. He only made the world the place of alterities and the



mine of impurities by way of inducing detachment (*tazhīd*) in you towards it.

230. He knew you would not accept mere counsel, so He made you sample the world's taste to a degree that separation from it would be easy for you.

231. Beneficial knowledge is the one whose ray of light expands in the mind and uncovers the veil over the heart.

232. The best knowledge is the one accompanied by fear (*al-khashya*).

233. If fear is united with knowledge, then it is for you; if not, then it is against you.

234. When it pains you that people do not come to you, or that they do so with rebukes, then return to the knowledge of God in you. But if the knowledge of Him in you does not satisfy you, then your affliction at not being content with that knowledge is greater than your affliction at the pain coming from people.

235. He only made affliction come at the hands of people so that you not repose in them. He wanted to drive you out of everything so that nothing would divert you from Him.

236. If you know that the devil does not forget you, then do not forget, for your part, Him who has your forelock in His hand.

237. He made the devil your enemy so that, through him, He could drive you toward Himself, and He stirred up your soul against you so that your drawing near to Him would be permanent.

#### CHAPTER XXV

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

238. He who attributes humility to himself is really proud, for humility arises only out of a sublime state. So when you attribute humility to yourself, then you are proud.

239. The humble man is not the one who, when humble, sees that he is above what he does; instead, the humble man is the one who, when humble, sees that he is below what he does.

240. Real humility is the one which arises from the contemplation of His Sublimity and the illumination of His Attribute.

241. Only the contemplation of His Attribute can dislodge you from your attribute.

242. The believer is he who is diverted from extolling himself by the praise of God, and who is diverted from remembering his good fortune by the fulfillment of God's rights.

243. The lover (*al-muḥibb*) is not the one who hopes for a recompense from his beloved (*maḥbūb*) or seeks some object. The lover is indeed the one who spends generously on you; the lover is not the one on whom you spend generously.

244. Were it not for the arenas of the soul (*mayādīnu 'n-nufūs*), the progress of the adepts (*sayru 's-sā'irīn*) could not be realized: there is no distance (*masāfa*) between you and Him that could be traversed by your journey, nor is there any particle between you and Him that could be effaced by your union with Him.

245. He put you in the intermediary world (*al-'ālam al-mutawassit*) between His Kingdom (*Mulk*) and His Realm (*Malakūt*) to teach you the majesty of your rank amongst His created beings and that you are a jewel (*jawhara*) wherein the pearls of His creations (*mukawwanāt*) are hidden.

246. The Cosmos (*al-kawn*) envelops you in respect to your corporeal nature (*iuthmāniyya*), but it does not do so in respect to the immutability of your spiritual nature (*thubūtu rūḥāniyyatika*). So long as the domains of the Invisible Worlds have not been revealed to him, the being in the Cosmos is imprisoned by his surroundings and confined in the temple of his nature.

247. So long as you have not contemplated the Creator, you belong to created beings; but when you have contemplated Him, created beings belong to you.

248. The permanence of sanctity does not necessitate that the attribute of human nature be non-existent. Sanctity is analogous to the illumination of the sun in daytime: it appears on the horizon but it is not part of it. Sometimes the suns of His Attributes shine in the night of your existence, and sometimes He takes that away from



you and returns you to your existence. So daytime is not from you to you, but instead, it comes upon you.

249. By the existence of His created things (*āthār*), He points to the existence of His Names (*asmā'*), and by the existence of His Names, He points to the immutability of His Qualities (*awṣāf*), and by the existence of His Qualities, He points to the reality of His Essence (*dhāt*), since it is impossible for a quality to be self-subsistent. He reveals the perfection of His Essence to the possessors of attraction (*arbābu 'l-jadhb*); then He turns them back to the contemplation of His Qualities; then He turns them back to dependence (*at-ta'alluq*) on His Names; and then He turns them back to the contemplation of His created things. The contrary is the case for those who are progressing (*as-sālikūn*): the end for those progressing (*nihāyatu 's-sālikīn*) is the beginning for the ecstasies (*bidāyatu 'l-majdhūbīn*), and the beginning for those progressing is the end for the ecstasies. But this is not to be taken literally, since both might meet in the Path (*aṭ-ṭarīq*), one in his descending (*fī tadallihi*), the other in his ascending (*fī taraqqihi*).<sup>1</sup>

250. It is only in the invisible world of the Realm (*fī ghaybi 'l-malakūt*) that the value of the lights of the hearts and of the innermost centers of being (*anwār al-qulūb wa 'l-asrār*) is known, just as the lights of the sky do not manifest themselves except in the visible world of the Kingdom (*shahādātu 'l-mulk*).<sup>2</sup>

251. For those who do good, finding the fruits of acts of obedience in this world is glad tidings of their recompense in the Hereafter.

252. How can you seek recompense for a deed He bestowed

<sup>1</sup> The ecstatic (*al-majdhūb*) is drawn by the celestial Attraction (*al-Jadhb*) from the very beginning, hence he does not experience the Path, with all of its obstacles and problems, in the same way as the methodical initiate (*as-sālik*), who is the normative type, whereas the *majdhūb* is rare. By created things in their multiplicity (*āthār*), the Shaykh means the actions (*af'āl*) of God in the world, and these proceed from and therefore point to the Divine Names (*asmā'*). These Names in turn point to His Qualities, such as the Living, the Knowing, the Willing, and the like; and they in their turn point to the Divine Essence, from which everything proceeds.

<sup>2</sup> The Shaykh speaks here only of the *Mulk* and the *Malakūt*, the latter symbolizing everything beyond this world, and for that reason does not mention the *Jabarūt*.

upon you out of charity? Or how can you seek recompense for a sincerity He gave you as a gift?

253. The lights of some people precede their invocations (*adhkār*), while the invocations of some people precede their lights. There is the invoker (*dhākir*) who invokes so that his heart be illumined; and there is the invoker whose heart has been illumined and he invokes.

254. The outer aspect of an invocation (*zāhiru dhikr*) would not be save for the inner aspect of contemplation and meditation (*bāṭinu shuhūd wa fikra*).

255. He made you witness before He asked you to give witness. Thus, the outer faculties speak of His Divinity while the heart and the innermost consciousness have realized His Unity.

256. He ennobled you with three charismatic gifts (*karāmāt*): He made you an invoker (*dhākir*) of Him, and had it not been for His grace, you would not have been worthy of the flow (*jarayān*) of the invocation of Him in you; He made you remembered by Him (*madhkūr bihi*) since He confirmed His relationship to you; and He made you remembered by those with Him (*madhkūr 'indahū*), thereby perfecting His grace upon you.

257. Many a life is long in years but meager in fruits, and many a life is short in years but rich in fruits.

258. He who has been blessed in life attains, in a short time, to such gifts from God that no expression or symbolic allusion could describe.

259. It would be disappointing—really disappointing—if you were to find yourself free of distractions and then not head towards Him, or if you were to have few obstacles and then not move on to Him!

260. Meditation (*al-fikra*) is the voyage of the heart in the domains of alterities (*mayādīn al-aghyār*).

261. Meditation is the lamp of the heart (*sirāj al-qalb*); so when it goes away, the heart has no illumination.

262. Meditation is of two kinds: the meditation of belief (*taṣdīq*) and faith (*īmān*), and the meditation of contemplation



(*shuhūd*) and vision (*ʿiyān*). The first is for the adepts of reflective thought (*arbāb al-ʿtibār*), the second is for the adepts of contemplation and intellectual vision (*arbāb ash-shuhūd wa 'l-istibṣār*).<sup>1</sup>

#### THE FIRST TREATISE

Amongst the things that he wrote to some of his friends, he said (may God be pleased with him!):

Now then, beginnings are the places where endings are revealed, so that whoever begins with God ends up with Him. He is the one you love and rush to in whatever occupies you, and He is the one you prefer in whatever you turn away from. Whoever is certain that God seeks him is sincere in seeking Him. He who knows that all matters are in God's hands is recollected through trust in Him. Indeed, it is inevitable that the pillars of this world's house of existence be destroyed and that its precious things be stripped away. For the intelligent man is more joyous over the permanent than he is over the evanescent. His light rays out, glad tidings have come to him. Thus, he turns away from this world, takes no notice of it, shuns it altogether. He does not therefore take it as a homeland, nor does he turn it into a home, but rather, while in it, he arouses his fervor towards God and seeks His help in going to Him. His determination, a riding-mount, is restless and ever on the move till it comes to kneel down in the Presence of the Holy (*ḥaḍrat al-quḍs*) on the carpet of intimacy, the place of reciprocal disclosure (*al-mufāṭaha*), confrontation (*al-muwāḥaja*), companionship (*al-mujālasa*), discussion (*al-muḥādatha*), contemplation (*almushāhada*), and viewing (*al-muṭāla'a*).

The Presence is the nesting-place of the hearts of initiates: they take refuge in it and dwell in it. Then, when they descend to the heaven of obligations and the earth of varied fortune, they do so with authority (*al-idhn*), stability (*at-tamkīn*), and profundity of certitude (*al-yaqīn*). For they have not so descended to obligations through improper conduct or forgetfulness, nor to fortune through

<sup>1</sup> The meditation of faith refers to that which starts with phenomena in this world and works back reflectively to their origins in God. The meditation of contemplation and vision is that which starts with the Real in Itself, and is the result of concrete knowledge. This aphorism has much in common with no. 29.

passion and pleasure; but instead, they have entered therein by God and for God and from God and to God.

"And say: My Lord, make me enter a truthful entering, and make me go forth a truthful going forth,"<sup>1</sup> so that I will see Your strength and power when You make me enter, and will submit and conform myself to You when You make me go out. Give me an authority from You, an ally that helps me or that helps others through me, but not one that goes against me: one that helps me against self-regard and extinguishes me from the realm of my senses.

#### THE SECOND TREATISE

Amongst the things that he wrote to some of his friends, he said (may God be pleased with him!):

If the eye of the heart (*ʿayn al-qalb*) sees that God is One (*wāḥid*) in His blessings (*minna*), the Law (*ash-sharī'a*) requires nevertheless that thanks be given to His creatures.

Indeed, in the matter of blessings, people fall into three classes. The first is that of the forgetful person (*al-ghāfil*), immersed in his forgetfulness, strong in the domain of his senses, blurred in inner vision (*ḥaḍratu quḍsihi*). He sees generosity as coming from mankind and does not contemplate it as coming from the Lord of the Universe, either out of conviction, in which case his associationism (*shirk*) is evident, or else out of dependence, in which case his associationism is hidden.

The second is that of the possessor of a spiritual reality who, by contemplating the Real King, is absent from mankind, and who, by contemplating the Cause of effects, is extinguished from the effects. He is a servant brought face to face with Reality (*al-Ḥaqqīqa*), the splendor of which is apparent in him. A traveller in the Path, he has mastered its extent, except that he is drowned in lights and does not perceive created things. His inebriety (*sukr*) prevails over his sobriety (*ṣaḥw*), his union (*jam'*) over his separation (*farq*), his extinction (*fanā'*) over his permanence (*baqā'*), and his absence (*ghayba*) over his presence (*ḥuḍūr*).

The third is that of a servant who is more perfect than the second: he drinks, and increases in sobriety; he is absent, and increases in

<sup>1</sup> Quran 17:80.



presence; his union does not veil him from his separation, nor does his separation veil him from his union; his extinction does not divert him from his permanence, nor does his permanence divert him from his extinction. He acts justly towards everyone and gives everyone his proper due.

Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq said to 'Ā'isha, when her innocence was revealed through the tongue of the Prophet,<sup>1</sup> "O 'Ā'isha, be grateful to the Messenger of God!" Then she said, "By God, I will be grateful only to God!" Abū Bakr had pointed out to her the more perfect station, the station of permanence which requires the recognition of created things (*ithbāt al-āthār*). God says, "Give thanks to Me and to thy parents."<sup>2</sup> And the Prophet said, "He who does not thank mankind does not thank God." At that time she was extinguished from her external senses, absent from created things, so that she contemplated the One, the Omnipotent (*al-Wāḥid al-Qaḥḥār*).

#### THE THIRD TREATISE

He said (may God be pleased with him!):

When he was asked with regard to the Prophet's words, "And my eye's refreshment (*qurraṭ 'aynī*) has been made to be in ritual prayer (*aṣ-ṣalāt*)," whether that was particular with the Prophet or whether anyone else had a share or part in it, he answered:

In truth, the eye's refreshment through contemplation (*ash-shuhūd*) is commensurate with the gnosis (*al-ma'rifa*) of the Object of contemplation (*al-mashhūd*). The gnosis of the Messenger is not like the gnosis of someone else; accordingly, someone else's refreshment of eye is not like his.

We have said that the refreshment of his eye in his ritual prayer was through his contemplating the Majesty of the Object of contemplation (*bi-shuhūdihi jalāla mashhūdihi*) only because he himself indicated as much by his words, "in ritual prayer." For he did not say "by means of ritual prayer," since his eye was not refreshed by means of something other than his Lord. How could it be otherwise? For he points to this station, and commands others to

<sup>1</sup> 'Ā'isha, one of the wives of the Prophet, was falsely accused of adultery but was cleared by a Quranic revelation (24:11-20).

<sup>2</sup> Quran 37:14.

realize it, with his words, "Adore God as if you were seeing Him," since it would have been impossible for him to see Him and at the same time to witness someone other than He alongside of Him.

Suppose someone were to say, "The refreshment of the eye can be by means of ritual prayer because it is a grace of God and emerges from God's blessing itself. So, how is it one cannot ascend by means of it, or how is it the eye's refreshment cannot be had by means of it? For God says, 'Say: In the grace of God and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice'"<sup>1</sup>

If that were said, then you must know that the significance of the verse, for those who meditate on the secret of the statement, is to be found in the main clause, for He says, "in that they should rejoice," and not, "in that you should rejoice, O Muḥammad." In other words, "Say to them: Let them rejoice by means of generous acts and kindness, but let your rejoicing be with Him who is kind," just as, in another verse, He says, "Say: *Allāh*! Then leave them prattling in their vain talk."<sup>2</sup>

#### THE FOURTH TREATISE

Amongst the things that he wrote to some of his friends, he said (may God be pleased with him!):

With regard to the advent of blessings (*wurūd al-minan*), people are of three categories. To the first belongs the one who rejoices at blessings, not in respect to their Bestower or Originator, but in respect to his pleasure in them. This man belongs to the forgetful (*al-ghāfilūn*), and God's words hold true for him: "Until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly."<sup>3</sup>

To the second category belongs the one who rejoices at blessings inasmuch as he sees them as blessings from Him who sent them or as grace from Him who brought it to him. God refers to him with His words: "Say: In the grace of God and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice. It is better than that which they hoard."<sup>4</sup>

To the third category belongs the one who rejoices in God.

<sup>1</sup> Quran 10:58.

<sup>2</sup> Quran 6:92.

<sup>3</sup> Quran 6:44.

<sup>4</sup> Quran 10:58.



Neither the exterior pleasure of blessings nor their interior graces divert him. Instead, his vision of God, his concentration on Him (*al-jam' 'alayh*), divert him from what is other than He, so that he contemplates only Him. God refers to him with His words: "Say: *Allāh*! Then leave them prattling in their vain talk."<sup>1</sup> God revealed to David: "O David, say to the truthful: Let them rejoice in Me, let them find joy in My invocation!"

May God make your joy and ours in Him and in the contentment that comes from Him; may He put us amongst those who understand Him; may He not put us amongst the forgetful; and may He voyage with us in the path of the God-fearing with His grace and generosity!

#### INTIMATE DISCOURSES (AL-MUNĀJĀT)

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

1. My God, I am poor in my richness, so why should I not be poor in my poverty?

2. My God, I am ignorant in my knowledge, so why should I not be most ignorant in my ignorance?

3. My God, the diversity of Your planning (*tadbīr*) and the speed of Your predestined decrees prevent Your servants, the gnostics, from relying on gifts or despairing of You during trials.

4. My God, from me comes what is in keeping with my miserliness, and from You comes what is in keeping with Your generosity.

5. My God, You have attributed to Yourself gentleness and kindness towards me before the existence of my weakness; so, would You then hold them back from me after the existence of my weakness?

6. My God, if virtues (*al-maḥāsīn*) arise from me, that is because of Your grace: it is Your right to bless me. And if vices (*al-masāwī*) arise from me, that is because of Your justice: it is Your right to have proof against me.

7. My God, how can You leave me to myself, for You are

<sup>1</sup> Quran 6:92.

responsible for me? And how could I be harmed while You are my Ally? Or how could I be disappointed in You, my Welcomer? Here am I seeking to gain access to You by means of my need of You. How could I seek to gain access to You by means of what cannot possibly reach you? Or how can I complain to You of my state, for it is not hidden from You? Or how can I express myself to You in my speech, since it comes from You and goes forth to You? Or how can my hopes be dashed, for they have already reached You? Or how can my states not be good, for they are based on You and go to You?

8. My God, how gentle You are with me in spite of my great ignorance, and how merciful You are with me in spite of my ugly deeds!

9. My God, how near You are to me, and how far I am to You!

10. My God, how kind You are to me! So what is it that veils me from You?

11. My God, from the diversity of created things and the changes of states, I know that it is Your desire to make Yourself known to me in everything so that I will not ignore You in anything.

12. My God, whenever my miserliness makes me dumb, Your generosity makes me articulate, and whenever my attributes make me despair, Your grace gives me hope.

13. My God, if someone's virtues are vices, then why cannot his vices be vices? And if someone's inner realities are pretensions, then why cannot his pretensions be pretensions?<sup>1</sup>

14. My God, Your penetrating decision and Your conquering will have left no speech to the articulate nor any state to him who has a state.

15. My God, how often has Your justice destroyed the dependence I built up on obedience or the state I erected! Yet, it was Your grace that freed me of them.

<sup>1</sup> The virtues that one claims for oneself are fissured with error because of the egocentrism involved. The same holds true for the inspirations and the like which the ego appropriates as its own. If that is the case, he is saying, for the virtues and inner states that have not been purified of all individualism, then what about the vices and pretensions as much?



16. My God, You know that, even though obedience has not remained a resolute action on my part, it has remained as a love and a firm aspiration<sup>1</sup>.

17. My God, how can I resolve while You are the Omnipotent (*al-Qāhir*), or how can I not resolve while You are the Commander (*al-Āmir*)?

18. My God, my wavering amongst created things inevitably makes the Sanctuary distant, so unite me to You by means of a service that leads me to You.

19. My God, how can one argue inferentially of You by that which depends on You for its existence? Does anything other than You manifest what You do not have, so that it becomes the manifest (*al-muḥir*) for You? When did You become so absent that You are in need of a proof giving evidence of You? And when did You become so distant that it is created things themselves that lead us to You?<sup>1</sup>

20. My God, blind is the eye that does not see You watching (*raqib*) over it, and vain is the handclasp of a servant who has not been given a share of Your love.

21. My God, You have commanded me to return to created things, so return me to them with the raiment of lights and the guidance of inner vision (*al-istibṣār*), so that I may return from them to You just as I entered You from them, with my innermost being (*as-sirr*) protected from looking at them and my fervor (*al-himma*) raised above dependence on them. For, truly, You have power over everything.

And he said (may God be pleased with him!):

22. My God, here is my lowliness manifest before You, and here is my state unhidden from You. From You, I seek union with You. I proceed from You in my argumentation about You. So guide me to You with Your light and set me up before You through sincerity of servanthood!

23. My God, make me know by means of Your treasured-up

<sup>1</sup> As can be seen, this is almost the same thing as *ḥikma* no. 29. He is saying that God is infinitely more "real" than His creatures. It is God who "proves" them, not they who prove Him.

Knowledge, and protect me by means of the mystery of Your well-guarded Name.

24. My God, make me realize the inner realities of those drawn nigh, and make me voyage in the path of those possessed by attraction (*ahl al-jadhb*).

25. My God, through Your direction (*tadbīr*) make me dispense with self-direction, and through Your choosing (*ikhtiyār*) for me make me dispense with my choosing; and make me stand in the very center of my extreme need (*iḍtirār*).

26. My God, pull me out of my self-abasement and purify me of doubting (*shakk*) and associationism (*shirk*) before I descend into my grave. I seek Your help, so help me; in You I trust, so entrust me to no one else; You do I ask, so do not disappoint me; Your kindness do I desire, do not refuse me; it is to You that I belong, so do not banish me; and it is at Your door that I stand, so do not cast me away.

27. My God, Your contentment is too holy for there to be a cause for it in You, so how can there be a cause for it in me? Through Your Essence (*dhāt*), You are independent of any benefit coming to You, so why should You not be independent of me?

28. My God, destiny and the decree of fate have overcome me, and desire with its passional attachments has taken me prisoner. Be my Ally so that You may help me and others through me. Enrich me with Your kindness, so that, content with You, I can do without asking. You are the one who makes the lights shine in the hearts of Your saints so that they know You and affirm Your Oneness. You are the one who makes alterities (*al-aghyār*) disappear from the hearts of Your lovers so that they love none but You and take refuge in none but You. You are the one who befriends them when the world makes them forlorn. You are the one who guides them till the landmarks become clear for them. He who has lost You—what has he found? He who has found You—what has he lost? Whoever takes someone other than You as a substitute is disappointed, and whoever wants to stray away from You is lost.

29. My God, how could hope be put in what is other than You, for You have not cut off Your benevolence? And how could someone other than You be asked, for You have not changed the norms



for conferring blessings? O He who makes His beloved friends taste the sweetness of intimacy with Himself so that they stand before Him with praise, and O He who clothes His saints with the vestments of reverential fear towards Himself so that they stand glorifying His glory—You are the Invoker (*adh-dhākir*) prior to invokers, You are the Origin (*al-Bādi*) of benevolence prior to servants turning to You, You are the Munificent (*al-Jawwād*) in giving prior to the asking of seekers, and You are the Giver (*al-Wahhāb*) who, in respect to what You have given us, asks us for a loan!

30. My God, seek me with Your grace so that I may reach You, and attract me with Your blessings so that I may draw near to You.

31. My God, my hope is not cut off from You even though I disobey You, just as my fear does not leave me even though I obey You.

32. My God, the world has pushed me toward You, and my knowledge of Your generosity has made me stand before You.

33. My God, how could I be disappointed while You are my hope, or how could I be betrayed while my trust is in You?

34. My God, how can I deem myself exalted while You have planted me in lowliness, or why should I not deem myself exalted, for You have related me to Yourself? Why should I not be in need of You, for You have set me up in poverty, or why should I be needy, for You have enriched me with Your goodness? Apart from You there is no God. You have made Yourself known to everything, so nothing is ignorant of You. And it is You who have made Yourself known to me in everything; thus, I have seen You manifest in everything, and You are the Manifest to everything. O He who betakes Himself to His throne (*'arsh*) with His clemency (*rahmāniyya*), so that the throne is hidden in His clemency, just as the Universe (*al-'awālim*) is hidden in His throne—You have annihilated created things (*bi-'l-āthār*), and obliterated alterities (*al-aghyār*) with the englobing spheres of light (*bi-muḥiṭāt aflāk al-anwār*)! O He who, in His pavilions of glory, is veiled from the reach of sight, O He who illumines with the perfection of His beauty (*bahā*) and whose Infinity (*'azama*) is realized by the gnostics' innermost being (*al-asrār*)—how can You be hidden, for You are the Exterior

(*az-Zāhir*)? Or how can You be absent, for You are the Ever-Present Watcher (*ar-Raqīb al-Ḥādir*)?

God is the Granter of success (*al-Muwaffiq*), and in Him I take refuge!



## ŞŪFĪ TECHNICAL TERMINOLOGY IN THE KITĀB AL-ḤIKAM

- al-'abd* (pl. *'ibād*): the servant, the slave; the creature dependent on his Creator; the worshipper of God.
- al-'ābid* (pl. *'ubbād*): the devotee; one who is occupied with the external acts of devotion (*'ibāda*, *q.v.*). See, also, the *zāhid* and the *'arīf*.
- al-adab* (pl. *adab*): conduct, behavior; attitude towards God; spiritual comportment.
- al-'adam*: non-being, non-existence; privation of being, and, in the positive sense: pre-existence, beyond the state of being or existence, even beyond the state of pure Being.
- al-aghyār*: *v. al-ghayr*.
- al-Aḥadiyya*: the Unity: the supreme Unity unknowable by creatures as such through distinctive cognition, since there is nothing outside of It, but knowable by the extinction (*al-fanā*) of the creature in It, in which case It knows Itself through Itself; derived from the Name *al-Aḥad*, "the One," which is the name of the absolute transcendence of God; the absolutely indivisible Divine Essence, impersonal and supraontological, and to be distinguished as such from the ontological principle, *al-Waḥdāniyya* (*q.v.*).
- al-akdār*: *v. al-kadar*.
- al-ākhirā*: the Hereafter; the opposite of *ad-dunyā* (*q.v.*).
- al-akwān*: *v. al-kawn*.
- al-'ālam* (pl. *'awālim*): domain, sphere, world; in the plural, it means the multiple domains or worlds of existence; not to be confused with *ad-dunyā* (*q.v.*), which carries a negative meaning, as "worldly existence."
- 'ālam al-ajsām*: the world of bodies, or the physical world, in contrast to *'ālam al-arwāḥ* (*q.v.*); the same as *'ālam al-Mulk* (*q.v.*).
- 'ālam al-arwāḥ*: the world of pure Spirits (*arwāḥ*, pl. of *rūḥ*), in contrast *'ālam al-ajsām* (*q.v.*): the same as *'ālam al-Jabarūt* (*q.v.*).
- 'ālam al-ghayb*: the world of invisible realities, perceptible only with

- contemplative vision, in contrast to *'ālam ash-shahāda* (*q.v.*); the same as *'ālam al-arwāḥ* (*q.v.*) and therefore *'ālam al-Malakūt* when the latter are considered as the immediate principles of physical or sensible realities, otherwise it is the same as the highest domain, *'ālam al-Jabarūt* (*q.v.*), which is the principle of all lower worlds of existence.
- 'ālam al-Jabarūt*: the world of absolute Immensity or Sovereignty, or Domination, which is that of the Spirit; the highest of the three worlds (*al-Jabarūt*, *al-Malakūt*, *al-Mulk*); the spiritual world.
- 'ālam al-Malakūt*: the world of the Realm or the Dominion; the psychic world, intermediate between the *'ālam al-Jabarūt* (*q.v.*) and the *'ālam al-Mulk* (*q.v.*); the world of the soul (*'ālam an-nafs*), it corresponds to the soul (*an-nafs*) in man with the heart (*al-qalb*) as its center.
- 'ālam al-Mulk*: the world of the Kingdom; the physical world of existence; the sphere of material forms; the same as *'ālam al-ajsām* (*q.v.*); insofar as it is perceptible by the sense faculties, it corresponds to the human body (*jism*) in man, and is therefore the same as *'ālam ash-shahāda* (*q.v.*); the third and the lowest of the degrees of universal manifestation (*al-Jabarūt*, *al-malakūt* *al-Mulk*).
- 'ālam ash-shahāda*: the world of testimony (by the senses): the physical domain of sensorial existence, in contrast to *'ālam al-ghayb* (*q.v.*).
- al-'amal* (pl. *a'māl*): deed, action, meritorious act.
- al-amdād*: *v. al-madad*.
- al-Amr* (pl. *umūr*): order, commandment; the pure Act of God (*kun*, "be"); the Word.
- al-anfās*: *v. an-nafas*.
- al-anwār*: *v. an-nūr*.
- al-'aql* (pl. *'uqūl*): the intellect (the same as the *nous* of Plotinus); the discursive reasoning, or reason (in contrast to the transcendent sense of intellect); the same as *al-baṣīra* (*q.v.*).
- al-'arīf* (pl. *'arīfūn*): the gnostic, in contrast to the *'ābid* (*q.v.*) and the *zāhid* (*q.v.*); he who possesses *ma'rifa* (*q.v.*).
- al-asbāb*: *v. as-sabab*.
- al-asrār*: *v. as-sirr*.
- al-āthār* (pl. *athar*): trace, created thing, creature, being; in the plural, it connotes multiplicity; as *al-āthār*, it means the



- manifestations of God's Qualities or His Names, the *āthār* being their external products, or the Names and Qualities being the interior realities of the *āthār*.
- awṣāf al-bashariyya*: the attributes of human nature, in contrast to the *awṣāf al-ilāhiyya* (q.v.).
- awṣāf al-ilāhiyya*: the attributes of the Divinity, in contrast to the *awṣāf al-bashariyya* (q.v.).
- awṣāf ar-rubūbiyya*: the attributes of Lordship; characteristics of God as the Lord (*ar-Rabb*), in contrast to *awṣāf al-'ubūdiyya* (q.v.).
- awṣāf al-'ubūdiyya*: the attributes of servanthood; man's attributes as a servant of God, in contrast to *awṣāf ar-rubūbiyya* (q.v.).
- 'ayn al-qalb*: the eye of the heart; the intellect (*al-'aql*) as the faculty of illuminative vision situated in the heart (to be distinguished from the reason, also *'aql*, situated in the brain, or its subtle counterpart); the same as the *baṣīra* (q.v.).
- 'ayn al-yaqīn*: the eye of certitude, the vision of certitude; the state resulting from *kashf* ("illumination") and the second of the degrees of knowledge: *'ilm al-yaqīn* (q.v.), *'ayn al-yaqīn*, and *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (q.v.); it corresponds to the second of the three religious stations (*anfās*, q.v.) of Islam (*islām*, *īmān*, *iḥsān*), namely, *īmān*.
- al-baqā'*: subsistence, permanence; the state of one who has been reintegrated in the Spirit and then has returned to the vision of created beings (*al-āthār*) but with unitive knowledge of the Real underlying them; the opposite of *al-fanā'* (q.v.).
- al-baraka* (pl. *barakāt*): benediction, blessing, grace.
- al-baṣar* (pl. *abṣār*): sight, view, eye, vision; the organ of vision (= *al-baṣīra*).
- al-bashariyya*: human nature; the opposite of the Divinity (*al-ulūhiyya*, *al-ilāhiyya*).
- al-baṣīra* (pl. *baṣā'ir*): inner vision; the faculty of the intellect (= *al-'aql*); clear vision; situated in the heart.
- al-baṣṭ*: expansion, in a spiritual, not a psychological sense; it is positive and attended with external signs of joy and gladness; the opposite of *al-qabḍ* (q.v.).
- al-bāṭil*: falsehood, the unreal; the opposite of *al-Ḥaqq* (q.v.).
- al-bāṭin* (pl. *bawāṭin*): the interior, the esoteric; *al-Bāṭin*, or the Interior, is one of the Names of *Allāh*; the opposite of *az-ẓāhir* (q.v.).

- al-birr*: goodness of character, innocence, virtuousness.
- al-bu'd*: remoteness, distance from God; the opposite of *al-qurb* (q.v.).
- al-burhān* (pl. *barāhīn*): proof; *ahl al-burhān* are those who proceed inferentially from creatures to God in their argumentation; the opposite of *ash-shuhūd* (q.v.) and *al-'iyān* (q.v.).
- ad-dalīl* (pl. *adilla*): guide, proof; *ahl ad-dalīl* is the same as *ahl al-burhān* (q.v.).
- aḍ-ḍamīr* (pl. *ḍamā'ir*): consciousness; the most interior secret or mystery of man; the same as *as-sarīra* (q.v.).
- adh-dhāt*: the essence; the self-subsistent essence of something, in contrast to the *ṣifa* (q.v.) or the *waṣf* (q.v.); *adh-Dhāt* is the Essence of God, absolutely self-subsistent, and the subject of the Qualities or Attributes (*aṣ-ṣifāt*).
- adh-dhawq* (pl. *adhawāq*): taste, intuition.
- adh-dhikr* (pl. *adhkār*): remembering, remembrance, the invocation of one of the Names of God.
- adh-dhilla*: humility, lowliness; the opposite of *al-'izz* (q.v.).
- adh-dhull*: v. *adh-dhilla*.
- ad-dunyā*: the world in a profane sense; this world with its passions; the opposite of *al-ākhirā* (q.v.).
- al-faḍā'*: space, expansive space; the space of the contemplative's voyage, but in a symbolic sense.
- al-fanā'*: extinction, evanescence; the extinction of the individuality in the Essence in the state of union; the opposite of *al-baqā'* (q.v.).
- al-faqīr* (pl. *fuqarā'*): poor man, possessed of the quality of *al-faqr* (q.v.); the initiate; the opposite of *al-Ghanī* (q.v.).
- al-faqr*: poverty, want, need in a spiritual sense; the opposite of *al-ghinā* (q.v.).
- al-farq*: separative consciousness; separation; the vision of things as they are; the opposite of *al-jam'* (q.c.).
- al-faṭḥ* (pl. *futūḥ*): illumination, inspiration.
- al-fikra*: meditation; the meditation can be of those who reflect or of those who have contemplative vision.
- al-ghafla*: forgetfulness, negligence, unawareness.
- al-Ghanī*: the rich, the wealthy; the Independent (one of the Names of God), and the opposite of *al-faqīr* (q.v.).
- al-ghayb*: the invisible world; the hidden; the non-manifested; v. *'ālam al-ghayb*.



- al-ghayba*: absence; absence from this world by effacement in the Presence of God.
- al-ghayr* (pl. *aghyār*): the other; difference, change; the other-than-God; alterity.
- al-ghinā*: wealth, richness, independence; the opposite of *al-faqr* (q.v.).
- al-ḥādith*: the contingent, the relative; the opposite of *al-Qadīm* (q.v.).
- al-ḥaḍra* (pl. *ḥaḍarāt*): presence; the Presence of God, or one of the Presences of God; one of the degrees of Reality viewed from the standpoint of the contemplative's state.
- ḥaḍrat qudsih*: the Presence of His Holiness; the luminous faculty of the intellect (= *al-baṣīra*) seen as a sanctifying presence.
- al-ḥāl* (pl. *aḥwāl*): state, spiritual state; a passing state, and therefore opposed to *al-maqām* (q.v.).
- al-ḥaqīqa* (pl. *ḥaqā'iq*): esoteric truth; reality of something in an inner sense; the divine Reality.
- al-ḥaqq* (pl. *ḥuqūq*): right, claim, obligation, duty; the truth, or the real, and therefore the opposite of *al-bāṭil* (q.v.); *al-Ḥaqq* is one of the Names of God, and means the Truth, the Real, God.
- ḥaqq al-yaqīn*: the truth of certitude; the third and final degree of knowledge (the first being *'ilm al-yaqīn*, q.v.).
- al-ḥijāb* (pl. *ḥujub*): veil; a veil covering God; a veil covering man or existence; illusion.
- al-himma* (pl. *himam*): decisive force, spiritual aspiration; fervor.
- al-ḥudūr*: presence of mind, concentration; the sense of the Presence of God.
- al-'ibāda*: the simple observance of ritual practices; the first of the three degrees of responding to God: *al-'ibāda*, *al-'ubūdiyya* (q.v.), and *al-'ubūda* (q.v.).
- al-'ibāra* (pl. *'ibārāt*): expression; expression of a state of soul in words.
- al-idhn*: permission, authority in a spiritual sense.
- al-iftiqār*: the state of needing or being in want of God; the state of being poor or dependent on God.
- al-iḥsān*: generosity, spiritual virtue; one of the three religious stations of Islam (v. *al-anfās*).
- al-ijād*: the giving of being or of existence to creatures by God; God's bringing things or beings into existence (*al-wujūd*, q.v.) from non-existence (*al-'adam*, q.v.).

- al-ikhtiyār*: choosing, selecting; self-willing, or egocentric willing.
- al-'illa* (pl. *'ilal*): cause; weakness in man.
- 'ilm al-yaqīn*: the science of certitude, resulting from demonstration or proof (*al-burhān*, q.v.); the first degree of knowledge, and the most elementary, in the ternary *'ilm al-yaqīn*, *'ayn al-yaqīn* (q.v.), and *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (q.v.); it corresponds to *al-islām* in the three stations of Islam (v. *al-anfās*).
- al-īmān*: faith, belief; the second of the three religious stations of Islam (v. *al-anfās*).
- al-imdād*: the giving of subsistence to creatures by God after they have been brought into existence.
- al-irāda*: will, willing, wanting.
- al-ishāra* (pl. *ishārāt*): allusion, symbolic allusion.
- al-ishrāq*: illumination, raying-out of light.
- al-islām*: submission (to the Law); the first of the three stations of Islam (v. *al-anfās*).
- al-ism* (pl. *asmā'*): name; a Name of God.
- al-Ism al-Mufrad*: the unique Name of God in Islam, *Allāh*.
- al-istibṣār*: contemplative vision or meditation with the *baṣīra* (q.v.); the same as *al-'iyān* (q.v.).
- al-'iyān*: contemplative vision or meditation; the same as *al-istibṣār* (q.v.) and *ash-shuhūd* (q.v.).
- al-'izz*: glory, grandeur; the opposite of *adh-dhull* (q.v.).
- al-jadhḥ*: divine attraction; ecstasy; v. *al-majdhūb*.
- al-Jalāl*: the Majesty, the Rigor of God; the complement of *al-Jamāl* (q.v.).
- al-jam'*: the unitive consciousness of the underlying Reality in things and beings; union; the opposite of *al-farq* (q.v.).
- al-Jamāl*: the Beauty of God; the complement of *al-Jalāl* (q.v.).
- al-kadar* (pl. *akdār*): impurity; trouble; worry.
- al-Kamāl*: perfection, plenitude; the Perfection of God.
- al-karāma* (pl. *karāmāt*): charisma, charismatic favor; miracle.
- al-kashf*: unveiling; illumination, intuition, insight.
- al-kathīf*: the opaque, dense world; the opposite of *al-laṭīf* (q.v.).
- al-kathīfa* (pl. *kathā'if*): opacity; dense thing; the opposite of *al-laṭīfa* (q.v.).
- al-kawn* (pl. *akwān*): the Cosmos, the Universe; created beings (in the plural).
- al-khalq*: the Creation; creature; the opposite of *al-Ḥaqq* (q.v.).
- al-khalwa* (pl. *khalawāt*): spiritual retreat, isolation.



*al-khidma*; the service of God.

*al-laṭīf*: the subtle world; the opposite of *al-kathīf* (q.v.); as *al-Laṭīf* ("the Subtle"), it is one of the Names of God.

*al-laṭīfa* (pl. *laṭā'if*): subtle thing, psychic or spiritual; subtle principle.

*al-madad* (pl. *amdād*): help, means of subsistence provided by God.

*al-majdhūb*: he who undergoes the divine attraction (*al-jadhb*, (q.v.); an ecstatic; the opposite of *as-sālik* (q.v.).

*al-ma'nā* (pl. *ma'ān*): the sense, the idea, the spiritual insight; the Archetype.

*al-maqām* (pl. *maqāmāt*): the station; the spiritual station of a permanent nature; the opposite of *al-ḥāl* (q.v.).

*al-ma'rifa* (pl. *ma'ārif*): knowledge, gnosis.

*al-ma'siya* (pl. *ma'ās*): disobedience; sin; the opposite of *aṭ-ṭā'a* (q.v.).

*al-mawhiba* (pl. *mawāhib*): divine gift, favor, grace.

*al-maydān* (pl. *mayādīn*): domain of existence, level of reality, arena of the soul.

*al-maẓhar* (pl. *maẓāhir*): place of manifestation; epiphany of God.

*al-mu'āmala* (pl. *mu'āmalāt*): one's dealing with or treatment of God, and vice-versa.

*al-Mūjīd*: God insofar as He gives being or existence to His creatures, bringing them from non-existence (*al-'adam*, q.v.) to existence (*al-wujūd*, q.v.).

*al-mukawwan* (pl. *mukawwanāt*): created being.

*al-Mukawwin*: God insofar as He gives being.

*al-munājāh* (pl. *munājāt*): intimate discourses, supplications, between man and God.

*al-muqarrab* (pl. *muqarrabūn*): one who has been drawn near to God.

*al-murāqaba*: concentrated attention on God, attentive control of oneself; vigilant attention.

*al-mushāhada*: contemplation.

*al-mutajarrīd*: he who engages in *at-tajrīd* (q.v.), and therefore the opposite of *al-mutasabbib* (q.v.).

*al-mutasabbib*: he who is engaged in *al-asbāb* (q.v.), and therefore the opposite of *al-mutajarrīd* (q.v.).

*an-naḥas* (pl. *anḥās*): breath; one of the three religious stations (*anḥās*) of Islam: *al-islām*, submission to God with its five pillars; *al-īmān*, faith, which consists of believing in God, His angels, books, Messengers, the Day of Judgement, and predestination;

and *al-iḥsān*, perfect virtue, or excellence, which consists in adoring God "as if you were seeing Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you" (*ḥadīth*).

*an-naḥs* (pl. *nufūs*): the soul, the psyche, the subtle reality of the individual; the ego.

*an-niyya*: the intention.

*an-nūr* (pl. *anwār*): light, either physical or psychic or spiritual; *an-Nūr* is the divine Light, uncreated, the principle of existence.

*al-qabḍ*: contraction, in a spiritual sense, not psychic, but having psychological reflections in sadness or distress; the opposite of *al-baṣṭ* (q.v.).

*al-Qadīm*: the Eternal, a Name of God; the opposite of *al-ḥādīth* (q.v.).

*al-qalb* (pl. *qulūb*): the heart; the faculty of contemplative intuition; it corresponds to the physical heart in its centrality; it can become the receptacle (*al-qābil*) of sentimentality, passion, and ignorance, or the receptacle of luminous virtue and knowledge, depending on case.

*al-qidam*: Eternity.

*al-qurb*: nearness to God; the opposite of *al-bu'd* (q.v.).

*ar-Rabb*: the Lord.

*ar-rizq*: provision, sustenance.

*ar-rubūbiyya*: the quality or nature of God as the Lord; the opposite of *al-'ubūdiyya* (q.v.): Lordship or Lordliness of God.

*ar-rūḥ* (pl. *arwāḥ*): the vital spirit, intermediary between body and soul; the Spirit, beyond the psychic world, beyond even the angelic domains, and therefore the uncreated *ar-Rūḥ al-Ilāhī*, the Divine Spirit; the created universal Spirit (*ar-Rūḥ al-kullī*); as the divine Spirit, it is the innermost being or secret (*as-sirr*, q.v.) in man, corresponding to *al-Jabarūt*.

*ar-rūḥāniyya*: spirituality, that is, relating to the higher senses of the word *ar-Rūḥ* (q.v.): not to be confused with the psychological (*an-naḥsāniyya*), much less with the physical (*al-jismāniyya* or *al-juthmāniyya*).

*ar-ru'ya*: vision, either physical, psychic, or spiritual.

*as-sabab* (pl. *asbāb*): cause, means of livelihood; profession, trade.

*aṣ-ṣaḥw*: sobriety in a spiritual sense; opposed to *as-sukr* (q.v.).

*as-sālik* (pl. *sālikūn*): the voyager in the Path; he who follows the Path methodically and from its beginning; the opposite of *al-majdhūb* (q.v.).



- as-sarîra* (pl. *sarā'ir*): the innermost heart or secret of man; consciousness; the same as *aḍ-ḍamîr* (q.v.).
- as-sayr*: the contemplative voyage.
- ash-shabah* (pl. *ashbāḥ*): the body; a form of corporeal nature.
- ash-shāhid*: the subject whose consciousness witnesses its own object of knowledge (*al-mashhūd*), and therefore it can be applied to both man and God, depending on level of meaning.
- ash-shawq* (pl. *ashwāq*): desire, fervor, longing.
- ash-shuhūd*: vision; contemplative vision or consciousness; that which results when the *shāhid*, or subject, and the *mashhūd*, or object, are united without duality; it is much more subtle than *al-mushāhada*, and the same as *al-'iyān* (q.v.).
- aş-şifa* (pl. *şifāt*): quality, attribute, either of the individual or of God, but which is not self-subsistent, in contrast to an essence (*adh-dhāt*, q.v.).
- as-sirr* (pl. *asrār*): secret, mystery; the innermost center of consciousness which has contact with the world of the Immensity, or the Infinite (*'ālam al-Jabarūt*, q.v.); the most luminous point within man; the Self.
- as-sukr*: inebriety, drunkenness, but in a spiritual sense; the opposite of *aş-şahw* (q.v.).
- as-sulūk*: progression in the Path towards the divine Reality; it is the opposite of *at-tanazzul* (q.v.) and the same as *at-taraqqī* (q.v.).
- aṭ-ṭā'a* (pl. *ṭā'āt*): obedience; the opposite of *al-ma'şiya* (q.v.).
- at-ta'arruf*: the knowledge that God gives of Himself to the contemplative; God's making Himself known to someone.
- at-ta'bîr*: the giving of expression to one's state or station; speaking forth with or without permission (*al-idhn*, q.v.).
- at-tadbîr*: self-direction, self-willing; God's direction or planning; the *tadbîr* can be both positive and negative, depending on whether it conforms to God's Will or not.
- at-taḥaqquq*: spiritual realization.
- at-tajallî* (pl. *tajalliyyāt*): unveiling, revelation, illumination.
- at-tajrîd*: isolation for the purpose of contemplation; isolation as opposed to being in the world to gain one's living, or *as-sabab* (q.v.).
- at-talwîn*: the changing of states; the opposite of *at-tamkîn* (q.v.).
- at-tamkîn*: the stability of one's inner state; the opposite of *at-talwîn* (q.v.).
- at-tanazzul*: descent or redescend from the divine Reality; the descent

- of the *majdhûb* (q.v.), whom God has drawn to Himself in a state (*ḥāl*) wherein His Essence was momentarily unveiled, from the Essence (*adh-Dhāt*) to the Qualities (*aş-Şifāt*), to the Names (*al-Asmā'*), to forms (*al-āthār*); the opposite of *at-taraqqī* (q.v.).
- at-taraqqī*: ascension or ascent; the ascent of the *sālik* (q.v.) to the divine Reality from the vision of forms (*al-āthār*) to the Names (*al-Asmā'*) to the Qualities (*aş-Şifāt*) to the Essence (*adh-Dhāt*); the opposite of *at-tanazzul* (q.v.).
- at-tawajjuh*: orientation of the contemplative in his inner voyage to God.
- at-tawḥîd*: the affirming of the divine Unity at all levels of knowledge.
- al-'ubbād*: v. *al-'ābid*.
- al-'ubūda*: total devotion or adoration; the final term of obedience for the contemplative in the ternary *al-'ibāda* (q.v.), *al-'ubūdiyya* (q.v.), and *al-'ubūda*.
- al-'ubūdiyya*: servanthood; the state of obedience; the intermediate state of the contemplative between *al-'ibāda* (q.v.) and *al-'ubūda* (q.v.); it consists in fulfilling the rights due to the Lordship (*ar-rubūbiyya*, q.v.) of God.
- al-'uzla*: retreat, isolation.
- al-Waḥdāniyya*: the Unicity of God; it is the ontological principle.
- al-wahm*: opinion, conjecture; the conjectural faculty; illusion; suspicion.
- al-waqt* (pl. *awqāt*): the moment, the instant; the instant or instants in a non-temporal sense, outside the process of past or future time; the "now" which reflects Eternity.
- al-wārid* (pl. *wāridāt*): inspiration in the sense of a spiritual insight.
- al-waṣf* (pl. *awṣāf*): the same as *aş-şifa* (q.v.); also nature, characteristic.
- al-wird* (pl. *awrād*): a litany to be recited.
- al-wujūd*: existence, being; *al-Wujūd* is God as Being; reality.
- al-wuṣūl*: union with God; arriving at God.
- al-yaqîn*: certitude.
- az-zāhid* (pl. *zuhhād*): ascetic; he who renounces the world; he is contrasted with the *'ābid* (q.v.), the *'ārif* (q.v.); one occupied with *zuhd* (q.v.).
- aż-zāhir* (pl. *zawāhir*): the exterior, the outer; as *aż-Zāhir*, a Name of God, the Exterior, the Manifest; the opposite of *al-bāṭin* (q.v.).
- az-zuhd*: renunciation of the world; asceticism; detachment.
- az-zuhhād*: v. *az-zāhid*.



## SILSILAS

### A. The Silsila of the Shādhiliyya to Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh

This first *silsila* is the usual one as found in all Shādhili works. It has been extracted from Muḥammad Zāfir al-Madanī's *al-Anwār al-quḍsiyya*, pp. 41-42.

1. Muḥammad
2. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib
3. Al-Ḥasan
4. Abū Muḥammad Jābir
5. Sa'id al-Ghaznawī
6. Faṭḥ as-Su'ūd
7. Sa'd
8. Abū Muḥammad Sa'id
9. Aḥmad al-Marwānī
10. Ibrāhīm al-Baṣrī
11. Zayn ad-Dīn al-Qazwīnī
12. Muḥammad Shams ad-Dīn
13. Muḥammad Tāj ad-Dīn
14. Nūr ad-Dīn Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī
15. Fakhr ad-Dīn
16. Tuḡay ad-Dīn al-Fuḡayyir
17. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-'Aṭṭār az-Zayyāt
18. 'Abd as-Salām b. Mashish
19. Abū 'l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhili
20. Abū 'l-'Abbās al-Mursī
21. Aḥmad Ibn 'Aṭā' illāh

Mansūr al-Baṭā'it  
Aḥmad ibn al-Rifā'i  
Abū 'l-Faṭḥ al-Mawḍi

Muḥammad ad-Daqqas  
Abū Madyan  
Abū 'Abdallāh M. al-Harānī

### B. A Typical Shādhili Silsila From Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh to the Present Day

This is a Maghribī *silsila* extracted from Martin Lings' *A Moslem Saint of the Twentieth Century*, pp. 214-216, with slight changes:

1. Aḥmad Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh

2. Dāwūd al-Bākhili
3. Muḥammad Wafā'
4. 'Alī b. Wafā'
5. Yaḥyā 'l-Qādirī
6. Aḥmad b. 'Uqba al-Ḥaḍramī
7. Aḥmad Zarrūq
8. Ibrāhīm Afahḥām
9. 'Alī aṣ-Ṣanhājī ad-Dawwār
10. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Majdhūb
11. Yūsuf al-Fāsī
12. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Fāsī
13. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh
14. Qāsim al-Khaṣṣāṣī
15. Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh
16. Al-'Arabī b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh
17. 'Alī al-Jamal
18. Al-'Arabī b. Aḥmad ad-Darqāwī
19. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Qādir
20. Muḥammad b. Qaddūr al-Wakīlī
21. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Būzīdī
22. Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā 'l-'Alawī

19. Aḥmad al-Badawī  
20. Muḥammad al-'Arabī  
21. al-'Arabī al-Huwari  
22. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī  
23. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥabīb



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